NEWS MAGAZINE AND NETWORK TELEVISION

NEWS COVERAGE OF THE MUNICH

OLYMPIC CRISIS, 1972

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A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School

University of Missouri-Columbia

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

_____ _____

by

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May 1989

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED
	May 1989	FINAL

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE

NEWS MAGAZINE AND NETWORK TELEVISION NEWS COVERAGE OF THE MUNICH OLYMPIC CRISIS, 1972

MASTER'S THESIS

5. FUNDING NUMBERS

6. AUTHOR(S)

PARRISH, Edwin Clements III.

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

University of Missouri-Columbia
School of Journalism
219 Jesse Hall
Columbia, Missouri 65211

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

Office of the Chief, Public Affairs (Army)
ATTN: SAPA-ZDP
PENTAGON, WASHINGTON D.C. 20310-1504

10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

POC IS MAJ W.M. DARLEY, AVN 225-4660/3405

12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: A
"APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE. DISTRIBUTION UNLIMITED."

12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE

13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words)

A content analysis of news coverage pertaining to terrorism associated with the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, Germany.   The study examines coverage in The Economist, Newsweek, Time and U.S. News & World Report; and T.V. coverage by ABC, CBS, and NBC. The thesis also presents an historical background related to terrorist use of mass media. Keywords:

14. SUBJECT TERMS

Press Coverage: Mass media; newspapers; ~~public affairs;~~ public relations; ~~journalism;~~ television; Germany; ~~Olympic Games;~~ terrorism; propaganda; ~~press~~ THESES, (AP)

15. NUMBER OF PAGES

131

16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified	SAR

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Defining "Terrorism"

S. I. Hayakawa wrote that language is our most highly developed form of symbolism; those adept in its use know language can be used to create drama, and drama can be dangerous. "To understand the symbolic process is to be able to use it to advantage; not to understand it is to remain forever its victim."[1]

"Terrorist" and "terrorism" are sensational symbols that command "high attention on the front pages of the world's newspapers and present graphic drama on network television news reports."[2] The term "terrorism" was applied by media, politicians and the population of the United States to the events that took place in building 31 at the Munich Olympic village on September 5, 1972, and "it was [the crisis at] Munich which (sic) confirmed that terrorism as a political weapon had come of age."[3]

In dealing with the news coverage of the Munich Olympic crisis, it is necessary to wrestle first with the definition of terrorism. Despite the soon-to-be-demonstrated difficulty of defining the word, hundreds of definitions have been advanced.[4]

Most definitions describe terrorists from the standpoint of their choice of victims, intents and methods.

1

Terrorists characteristically choose symbolic targets rather than those of narrowly military significance. They purposely ignore the conventional distinction between combatants and noncombatants, often choosing to kill or injure civilians. Their purpose is political: to terrorize, to intimidate, to dispirit a government or a people through audacious and brutal aggression. . . . There is no declaration of war, no professional military adversary, no willingness by the perpetrators to abide by conventional military constraints.[5]

It is a tactic of indiscriminate violence used against innocent bystanders for political effect -- and it must be distinguished from the selective use of violence against the symbols and institutions of a contested power, which is unfortunately a norm of international life.[6]

The U.S. Department of Defense defines terrorism as "the unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence by a revolutionary organization against individuals or property, with the intention of coercing or intimidating governments or societies, often for political or ideological purposes."[7]

James T. Burtchael criticizes this definition as being too narrow in its scope because it leaves no room for a state's terrorism directed against its own population or the population of another state.[8] Joseph Kraft seems to refute the most critical element of Burtchael's criticism by pointing out that "hostages are taken [by terrorists] precisely in order to capture public opinion in ways that coerce governments."[9]

The credibility of Kraft's statement is easily established. "It might be worth noting that from 1973 to 1977, in virtually any week from any month, someplace in

2

the world, someone was being taken hostage and it was being reported."[10]

Burtchael's criticism is just as easily substantiated by examination of a small slice of the history of Germany, the country in which the Munich Olympic crisis took place. This emotional appeal to the conscience of the world for help against the Nazis was originally printed in _Monde_, the Paris Communist Weekly.

> The armaments factory S., which manufactures machine guns, is suddenly inundated with revolutionary tracts. One finds them in the washrooms, coatrooms, among the machines. The Gestapo sends a flock of secret agents. Their anger mounts. Every worker is forced to undergo an individual cross-examination. Dozens of workers are searched. The Gestapo fills the factory, and for two days, until work is resumed, they rummage in every worker's bag. All this without success. They are unable to ascertain how the tracts were introduced into the factory or who brought them in.
> Then the Gestapo arrests fifty workers, workers who are known to have been at one time against Hitler and also those who have signed workers' solidarity lists. Cross examinations begin. First threats, then blows. The most stubborn get the 'bath': they are plunged into a concrete basin full of ice water to make them talk. The Gestapo ends by choosing from the fifty men three who have taken a direct part in the distribution of the tracts.
> But no method is effective in extracting confessions from these men. They will keep silent even if they are beaten to death. It is then that the Gestapo resorts to its 'new' method, a 'cross examination' of the men's families. They arrest the families of the workers and bring them to the torture house -- the wives, the children. The tool-maker W. has a mother who is sixty-eight years old. They bring her just the same.
> Words cannot describe what follows. The torture of the men is resumed -- in the presence of their families. The women have spasms of tears; the children cry in a way that would break one's heart. They cling to their husbands and fathers. They beg them to tell everything. Two men break down. They cannot endure it any longer. They have resisted every physical torture, but the moral torture breaks their

3

resistance. They confess. But the tool-maker W. is
still silent. His 'cross examination' continues.
Suddenly he realizes that it is not he alone who is
being beaten. His little daughter of seven is
bleeding from a wound on her head. His wife's face is
covered with contusions. His old mother has long
since lost consciousness, stretched out on the floor.
Then he, too confesses. He gives the names of his
accomplices. The 'new method' of the Gestapo, which
has been so successful, is extended to the new
prisoners.[11]

Most of the definitions also ignore the use of

"terrorism" by one segment of society to drive out or

subdue another segment living in the same area. The

history of the United States is rife with examples

of this kind of "terrorism." The Ku Klux Klan, for

example, is "a secret society of white men founded

in the southern states after the Civil War . . .

[and] organized in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1915 as the

'Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan":

(sic) it is anti-negro, anti-Semetic, anti-Catholic,

etc. and uses terrorist methods."[12]

Sometimes even "good Americans" have turned to bigoted

extremism in the name of God and / or country to protect

"American" morality and values from "outsiders," as

exemplified in this story from our past.

> 'Brothers, I want to make our presence felt. Moses
> had a house-cleaning, and Elijah had one too. . .'
>   In the little town of Whiteville, North Carolina, a
> lantern-jawed Baptist preacher named George R. Hunt
> rolled his eyes heavenward while the congregation of
> farmers and storekeepers intoned a fervent 'Amen.'
>   For months, the Rev. Mr. Hunt had been exhorting
> the community to purge itself of 'undesirable' men and
> women. Last week a local grand jury concluded an
> investigation[,] which had drawn from reluctant
> witnesses an unhappy tale of nightriders,
> proscription lists, and brutal floggings.

4

A white-hooded band of vigilantes had dragged
six Whiteville citizens from their homes in the
dead of night, beaten them with leather straps, and
ordered them to 'live decently or get out of the
country.'
Investigators, unable to learn from the frightened
countryfolk the names of the nightriders, were
compelled to write down the Whiteville
floggings as merely another chapter in
America's long history of Rule by the Use of
the Lash.[13]

Alfred P. Rubin defines terrorism as "acts committed

in time of peace that, if committed by a soldier in time of

war, would be war crimes,"[14] and Brian M. Jenkins agrees

with him. "One man's terrorist is everybody's terrorist.

Terrorism is best defined by the quality of the acts, not

by the identity of the perpetrators or the nature of their

cause. All terrorist acts are crimes."[15]

"The central but oft-ignored problem of defining

terrorism is that it is essentially a hollow word, devoid

of meaning. A terrorist is essentially a person who

spreads terror for the purpose of inducing others to

follow a course of action they would not otherwise

follow. Society has added, arbitrarily, that the intent

of the terrorist violence -- threatened or real -- must

be political, although most definitions include such

elements as religion, ethnicity, territory, or race."[16]

The problem of definition is further complicated by

one's perspective. "Take the example of hijacking: when

in the early 1960s opponents of Fidel Castro hijacked

planes to get out of Cuba they were received almost as

heroes in the United States. When U.S. citizens traveled

the same way to Cuba they were soon labeled terrorists.
Depending on who committed it, the same act was labeled
differently."[17]

"Analysis of the multiple phenomenon now considered as
terrorism is next to impossible,"[18] but the best work
toward definition was done by Alex P. Schmid in his 1983
book, Political Terrorism. "Based on a content analysis of
109 definitions of terrorism, Schmid describes the
frequency with which certain elements appear."[19]

(1)	Element of violence / force	83.5 percent
(2)	Political intent	65 percent
(3)	Fear and terror	51 percent
(4)	Threat, psychological effects	47 percent
(5)	Anticipated reactions	41.5 percent
(6)	Distinction is drawn between victims and actual targets	37.5 percent
(7)	Purposive / systematically planned action	32 percent
(8)	Discussion of the actual method of combat / strategy / tactics	30.5 percent
(9)	Lack of humanitarian constraints linked to the violation of accepted norms of behavior	30 percent
(10)	Use of coercion / extortion to induce compliance	28 percent
(11)	Publicity	21.5 percent
(12)	The act's impersonal / indiscriminate character	21 percent
(13)	Emphasis on the civilian / noncombatant status of the victims	17.5 percent

6

(14)	Emphasis on intimidation	17 percent
(15)	Emphasis on innocence of victims	15.5 percent
(16)	Emphasis on group / movement as perpetrator	14 percent
(17)	Emphasis on the act's symbolic / demonstrational dimension	13.5
(18)	Unpredictability of the act	9 percent
(19)	The act's clandestine nature	9 percent
(20)	The act's repetitive aspect	7 percent
(21)	The act's criminal nature	6 percent
(22)	The demands it places on third parties[20]	4 percent

As the list indicates, the word "terrorist" can mean anything from the school-yard bully to Attila the Hun, depending on the definition applied, and "the half-jocular statement, 'My freedom fighter is your terrorist, and your freedom fighter is my terrorist,' reveals the vacuity of the term. A communist is a person who wants to set up a communist regime; this person is defined by his or her aims. But a terrorist is defined only by the means. As a result, the range of what we call terrorism is infinite. From Tylenol to Arafat, from the downing of an Air India plane off England to the assassination of Indira Gandhi, from the hijacking of an ocean liner to a suspected Bulgarian agent taking a shot at the Pope -- all these acts are subsumed in the term terrorism. As such it is a practically meaningless concept from both the operational and policy point of view and even from the analytical

one."[21]

But it is still terrorism.

1.2   International Terrorism and the Mass Media

Although this discussion of terrorism and its

relationship to the mass media is brief, the history of

terrorism is anything but short, and, as this excerpt from

the book of "Numbers" in the Bible's Old Testament

indicates, the Jewish people have not always been the

victims.

> They warred against Mid'ian, as the Lord commanded
> Moses, and slew every male. And the people of Israel
> took captive the women of Mid'ian and their little
> ones. And Moses was angry with the officers of the
> army, the commanders of the thousands and the
> commanders of the hundreds, who had come from service
> in the war. Moses said to them, 'Have you let all the
> women live? Behold, these caused the people of
> Israel, by the counsel of Balaam, to act treacherously
> against the Lord in the matter of Pe'or, and so the
> plague came among the congregation of the Lord. Now
> therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and
> kill every woman who has known man by lying with him.
> But all the young girls who have not known man by
> lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.'[22]

While terrorism is as old as civilization, and acts of

terrorism are recorded in the Bible, some of the

differences between terrorism through history and terrorism

now include frequency, violence and quality media

coverage.[23] The pervasive argument in the literature about

terrorism and the media comes about because "it is

commonplace to suggest that the media actually encourage

terrorist acts by giving detailed coverage whenever such

actions occur."[24]

Actually, "there is no significant evidence that the media act as a contagion"[25] of terrorism. "As one reviews the literature it becomes shockingly clear that not a single study on accepted social science research methods has established a cause-effect relationship between media coverage and the spread of terrorism. Yet public officials, scholars, editors, reporters, and columnists continually link the two elements and present their relationship as proven."[26]

The United States became concerned about international terrorism in 1968 when its ambassador to Guatemala was assassinated.[27] The ambassador's murder, which sparked a renewed interest in this "new" form of warfare, took place about six years after "the first Trans-Atlantic TV hook-up (sic) via the artificial earth satellite[,] Telestar-1."[28] The television screen had become "a window affording a glimpse of any corner of the globe,"[29] and the picture of terrorism seen through that window was an ugly, gripping one.

That assassination began a process in which terrorists learned that "one surefire way of attracting worldwide attention through television is to slaughter a considerable number of human beings, in a spectacular fashion, in the name of a cause."[30] They discovered the media as a conduit through which to get and hold a large audience in an attempt to gain "leverage, a way of exercising influence beyond their actual means of strength."[31]

9

In 1974, just more than a year after the Munich Olympic massacre, American intelligence experts reported that 432 acts of international political terrorism had been carried out during the previous six years. A group of experts counted 6,294 acts of international terrorism between 1970 and 1979. The next year the Central Intelligence Agency reported that 597 persons were killed by terrorists in 1979.[32]

In 1983 the United States was the target of 500 international terrorist actions. In 1984 the number rose to 600. The numbers represent about half of all terrorist actions that took place in the world during those years, and most of the rest were directed against allies of the United States or pro-Western Third World countries.[33]

Paul Bremer, the United States' Ambassador at Large for Counter-Terrorism at the time, asserted that there were 300 incidents of international terrorism in 1986. Attacks were made on the citizens and property of more than 80 countries and caused nearly 2,000 casualties.[34]

The numbers are impressive when taken in isolation, but compared to the population of the world they are insignificant. Terrorism is not a major danger to mankind. It breaks out sporadically, and some authorities on the subject say it is usually politically unsuccessful.[35]

There are many opinions about the political effectiveness of terrorist actions. In October 1972, just after the Munich Olympic crisis, Eric Hobsawm wrote about

the relative ineffectiveness of terrorism as a political weapon.

> If we take the case of the 250 or so aircraft hijackings of recent years, what these have achieved is at most some financial extortion and the liberation of political prisoners. As a form of activity, hijacking belongs to the gossip-column of revolutionary history, like 'expropriation,'as it's called -- that is to say, political bank robbery. So far as I am aware, the only movements[,] which have systematically used hijacking for political purposes are sections of the Palestine guerrillas: (sic)and it doesn't seem to have helped them significantly.[36]

Jeffrey Hart, at the other end of the spectrum, expressed the opinion that terrorism may be the most dangerous form of warfare ever experienced in the world.

> There are professional strategists who consider that terrorism is a much more dangerous threat to civilization than nuclear warfare. For one thing, you yourself are much more likely to be killed by a terrorist, especially if you travel by air, than you are to be killed by a nuclear bomb. For another thing, terrorists have the capability of changing the balance of power by disrupting the normal political and democratic process.[37]

Nevertheless, terrorism is a sensational news story because it is dramatic, potentially violent and unusual. "It frequently develops over a period of time, occurs in exotic locations, offers a clear confrontation, involves bizarre characters, and is politically noteworthy."[38]

"Down go the houselights, up goes the curtain and then -- BANG. The stage becomes alive with the sounds, the lights and the characters of a highly dramatic performance. The actors are political terrorists. They are the protagonists of much modern tragedy, and their theatre is

the globe."[39] "If terrorism is theatre, then terrorists

want to perform where there are plenty of spectators in the

seats."[40]

The audience is "the general public of the target

country and often the world public as well. And the best

way to reach and hold the interest of such a large and

diverse audience is with the assistance of the media.

Terrorists usually do all they can to make sure television,

radio and newspaper people tell all about the event in

sufficient detail, emphasis and color to attract and hold

the audience's attention."[41]

Jonathan Alter wrote of the obvious preference the

terrorists who hijacked TWA flight 847 in 1985 demonstrated

for television over other forms of media. "Neither [Nabih]

Berri, who has lived in the United States, nor his media-

savvy brethren spent time helping the print press. Like

American politicians, they have learned to go over the

heads of reporters directly into living rooms."[42]

Georgie Anne Geyer wrote of the developing importance

of the media in the process of international terrorism.

> Interestingly enough, I have found that guerillas . .
> . terrorists . . . freedom fighters . . . whatever you
> choose to call them, understood us and our role
> perfectly -- in many ways they understood it better
> than many Americans. . . . During these years [the
> early 1980s] the correspondent's role was changing.
> Diplomats could not get to these revolutionaries, for
> the revolutionaries blamed them for their problems.
> We had become the new diplomats -- the new
> intermediaries in the world -- the surrogates for
> nations.[43]

"Perhaps because Geyer's columns are 'commentary' in

12

nature rather than straight news reporting, they have more
in common with the 'entertainment' aspect of broadcast
journalism than with other print reporting. Regardless,
her comments stand in opposition to the views of Fred
Barnes and other [media] professionals who want to report
the news rather than make the news."[44]

> Fred Barnes, senior political editor of The New
> Republic, ... recommends that newsmen (sic) should
> never become negotiators, as when Ted Koppel on ABC's
> 'Nightline' asked Muslim leader [Nabih] Berri if he
> would like to send any message to President Reagan.
> Barnes feels that normal diplomatic channels are more
> proper than unedited airings of demands by terrorist
> spokesmen in resolving problems such as this.[45]

Geyer also may have an inflated opinion of the
Palestinian terrorists' understanding of the media's role,
as indicated by Chris Drake, who was the NBC bureau chief
in Beirut at the time, in his description of the events
that took place during a press conference with five of the
hostages taken from TWA flight 847 in 1985.

> 'When you go to a news conference and they start
> ripping phones out of the wall, well...,' Drake said.
> Drake and representatives of other networks watched
> helplessly as gun-toting guerrillas disconnected the
> direct lines to New York that had been carefully
> assembled to provide live coverage of the event. Only
> Charles Glass, an ABC correspondent, was able to stay
> on the air for two minutes with live audio from the
> scene before his wires were cut, too.[46]

Despite their problems and misunderstandings, "for
much of the week [of the TWA hijacking], the Shiite
hijackers -- as savvy in the 'global village' as in their
own -- got exactly what they wanted out of the news media:
a conduit for their cause and their demands."[47] Tony
Atwater confirmed the prominence of the story in his study

13

of "Network Evening News Coverage of the TWA Hostage Crisis," in which he found that "a total of 491 hostage stories was broadcast over the 17-day crisis period, comprising approximately 12 hours of news time."[48]

Indeed, it seems terrorists perceive the media as a conduit through which to get and hold the attention of a large audience.[49] "This sometimes puts the news media in the uncomfortable role of appearing to be an accomplice to the terrorist."[50] Charges of such complicity infuriate news persons like Dan Rather of CBS, who insists: "The problem is the terrorists. The problem is not the people who call attention to what the terrorists are doing."[51]

Actually, television and terrorists share many common goals. They both want to reach large, interested audiences. Terrorists provide television with dramatic, sensational material, which is ideally suited to visual broadcast. In return the media provide the terrorist with a willing, effective tool of persuasion.[52]

While "history does not wait for the camera,"[53] and it would be ridiculous to assert that terrorism would not be a problem if the media refused to cover it, terrorists have long recognized the value of publicity. Abane Ramdane, an early, modern terrorist leader, explained the necessity of calling world attention to the "cause" in 1962 with his rhetorical question, "Is it better for our cause to kill ten of the enemy in the countryside of Telergma, where no one will speak of it, or one in

14

Algiers that will be mentioned the next day in the American press?"[54]

The argument that publicity provided by the media is precisely the reason terrorists stage their crises has occasionally led to requests from those opposing the terrorists for the media to refuse to cover terrorist events. In addition to the impractical nature of the request from a purely economic point of view, in which "free-wheeling competition for column inches and broadcast minutes"[55] virtually guarantees that a terrorist incident that goes unreported by one news agency will be picked up by another, there are other problems with such voluntary cooperation.

On July 15, 1985 Prime Minister Margret Thatcher addressed the opening session of the American Bar Association in London. She proposed a voluntary code of conduct among the media to refuse to "say or show anything which (sic) could assist the terrorists' morale or their cause while the hijacking lasted." She asked them to "try to find ways to starve the terrorist and the hijacker of the oxygen of publicity on which they depend."[56]

Lawrence K. Grossman, who was then president of NBC News, referred to Prime Minister Thatcher's remarks and to similar requests by U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese III, among others, who had called for a blackout on terrorist episodes, pooled network coverage of terrorist incidents, and for a uniform set of reporting standards to be

15

established. In his remarks to a symposium of journalists from around the world in Davos, Switzerland, he acknowledged that the media should not report information that will endanger either the victims of terrorism or those who are trying to put an end to the terrorist incident, but he stated that pooled coverage and agreed-upon standards of reporting were "terrible ideas."[57]

"'In journalism, as in most other pursuits, competition is better than collusion,' Grossman said. He told the journalists that there is no formula available to help them decide how to cover 'each highly emotional, terrifying and unpredictable terrorism episode,' and he urged them to use 'professionalism, tempered by common sense and good judgment.'"[38]

James W. Hoge asserts that the media must be aggressive in their coverage of terrorism. He asserts that a policy of benign neglect or selective coverage may allow government officials to take such restraint for granted and eventually institutionalize it. His view is that it is dangerous for the press to allow government officials such latitude in suppressing the news.

The dangers of voluntary suppression of the news at the request of government officials are apparent in Mary McGregory's assessment of Ted Koppel's interview of Henry Kissinger during the TWA hijacking of 1985.

> 'If the Nazis had invited networks to Auschwitz to
> watch people marching off to gas chambers, would it be
> appropriate news coverage to cover that?' he

16

[Kissinger] asked, opening up the floor beneath his feet.

His host gave Kissinger a much-needed glimpse into the function of the press, which is to tell what is going on, because one of the premises of a democratic society is that free people, when informed, will take action against evil.

'Had they had the chance,' Koppel said, 'the networks "absolutely" should have shown Auschwitz and Buchenwald.'

'Can you imagine what the outrage of the world would have been if it had seen live television pictures of what was going on there?' he asked.

Kissinger was only saying what he always said at the height of his glory: that you cannot trust ordinary Americans to reach the right conclusions without the guidance of someone superior -- like himself, for instance.[59]

On the other hand, the media find themselves in jeopardy of losing their independence through too much compliance with the terrorists. "Marshall McLuhan once defined the media as the only industry which (sic) can be hijacked with its own consent,"[60] and terrorists have been known to go to outlandish lengths in their "assistance" to the media.

During the TWA hijacking in 1985, a reporter from Newsweek was offered a tour of the airliner for $1,000. He declined. Although there is no confirmation of the sale, several Amal militiamen tried to auction sessions with the hostages for $12,500. They weren't laughed off, and one reporter said he wouldn't be surprised to see some of the militiamen driving around in Cadillacs.[61]

On the ground in Beirut, faction-torn Shiites split into yet more factions -- each loyal to its favorite American television network. CBS and NBC worried that the competition was growing dangerous; one CBS producer was briefly handcuffed and pushed around by militiamen. Even the Shiites wanted a cease-fire. They posted a notice in the Commodore Hotel that all

17

footage of the hostages should be pooled.[62]

Some of the footage aired on American television during the TWA hostage crisis was little more than public relations concocted through collusion between the hijackers and television crews. Although the three major networks stressed that the terrorists were not given any air time, and the remarks of the hostages were edited in the United States, the hostages took the terrorists' message into American living rooms. The terrorists themselves did much of the editing. They seized some of the videotape and deleted the footage of four hostages whose comments they didn't like. The remainder was aired on American television anyway.62

The media sometimes make "questionable" promises to terrorists in order to obtain important stories. As an example, Abul Abbas, who was wanted in three countries for his part in the Achille Lauro hijacking, granted an interview to NBC correspondent Henry Champ on the condition that his whereabouts be kept secret. In the interview he said he would export terrorism to the United States in retaliation for the U.S. bombing of Libya.[63]

NBC's deal with Abbas was criticized by the State Department and by the New York Times, which refused to interview him under the same conditions. "Neither ABC nor CBS would comment on how they would have handled the same story. But CBS commentator Charles Osgood summed up the thoughts of many viewers: 'The news media must not be

government controlled . . . but perhaps we should not let
Abul Abbas and his kind call the shots either.'"[64]

Charles Osgood's criticism sounds moral and righteous,
but it ignores three significant points. First -- NBC did
nothing illegal. Second -- the story was interesting.
Third -- NBC got the story, and nobody else did.

1.3 The Munich Olympic Crisis

In retribution for the atrocities of World War II,
West Germany helped the Jewish people establish their
homeland in 1948. A remorseful Germany gave Israel a six-
billion Deutschmark gift and initiated diplomatic
relations. The gestures led to West Germany's alienation
from most of the nations of the Arab League. Israel
quickly made itself known as a power in the Middle East.
Various Arab armies suffered humiliating defeats by the new
nation in 1948, 1949, 1956 and 1967. In 1972 Chancellor
Willi Brandt made efforts to re-establish good relations
with the Arab world. The Olympic Committee torpedoed
his overtures. It refused even to acknowledge two
requests by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)
to compete in the Olympic games.[65]

The snub inspired the leaders of the PLO to form Black
September, which would "put forward a plan with three
aims:"

> -- to assure the world without exception of the
> existence of the Palestinian people;
> -- to capitalize on the media coverage of Munich to
> give our cause a world-wide din, whatever the effect;

19

and finally
-- to put pressure on Israel to set free an initial
total of two hundred of our men.[66]

Early in the morning of September 5, 1972, eight

members of Black September shot their way into the Israeli

quarters at the Olympic village in Munich and onto network

television in the United States. The drama of hostages and

murders ended twenty-three hours later in a two-hour

shoot-out at a nearby military airfield. At the end

of the gunfight, eleven members of the Israeli

Olympic team, five of the Palestinian gunmen and a

West German policeman were dead.

"There is a fascination with violence and flamboyant

terrorist actions,"[67] and, as the Palestinian planners

expected, the Munich crisis became the top network

television news story for an eight-day period. The period

included a weekend, during which only NBC broadcast an

evening news program.

The Munich crisis was not the first bizarre instance

of terrorism designed to gain Palestinian access to the

world's agenda. It followed several previous attempts as

listed:

> September, 1970 -- Guerrillas from the Popular Front
> for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), in concerted
> operations, hijacked three airliners -- U.S., British
> and Swiss -- to a landing strip in the Jordanian
> desert. After being held captive for days, passengers
> and flight crews were released, and the guerrillas
> blew up the three huge planes. During the same
> period, another U.S. plane was hijacked to Cairo and
> blown up on the ground.
>
> November, 1971 -- Guerrillas of the Black September
> group assassinated Premier Wasfi Tal of Jordan on the

steps of the Cairo hotel.

February, 1972 -- PFLP brigands hijacked a West German airliner, forced it to land at Aden and held it until the West German government paid a 5-million-dollar ransom.

May, 1972 -- Black September gunmen took over a Belgian airliner en route to Tel Aviv. Upon landing, they demanded release of Palestinian Arabs held in Israeli Jails in return for safety of the passengers. Israeli troops stormed the plane and killed two hijackers. A passenger was fatally wounded.

May, 1972 -- three Japanese terrorists hired by the PFLP took weapons out of suitcases and opened fire in the Tel Aviv airport, killing 26 persons and wounding 80. Two of the gunmen were slain by police.

August, 1972 -- a Guerrilla plot to blow up an Israeli airliner failed. Two Arabs in Rome duped two British girls into taking aboard the Israel-bound plane a bomb secreted in luggage. The device exploded after takeoff, but the pilot brought the aircraft safely back to Rome.[68]

The Munich Olympic crisis was, however, the first terrorist spectacular to which the American public was exposed step by step on television.

"Terrorist episodes, especially hostage situations, are made of the stuff that sells copy. They are dramatic and violent, and life hangs in the balance."[69] Because "the contemporary passion of the daily press is not with ideas but with profits,"[70] the story was a tremendous media opportunity for the many news organizations that were present at the Olympic games.

The data obtained in this study indicate the drama of danger to hostages posed by flamboyant, seemingly bloodthirsty Black September terrorists was as irresistible to the American public as it was to the media. The Munich

crisis became the top network television news story for
eight days. It was also the most important story in the
three U.S. news magazines and the British The Economist
published the week after the crisis.

The crisis ended quickly -- as did its news value. The
United States was embroiled in War in Vietnam, and news
stories about the Watergate break-in knocked the Munich
crisis off the air and out of the public consciousness on
September 13.

Americans had more important things to worry about
than a conflict between Palestinians and Jews on German
soil. Indeed, on October 8, 1972, a Gallup Poll recorded
Americans' opinions of "the most important problem facing
America today" as #1 Vietnam (27%) and #2 Inflation, high
cost of living (27%).[71] The poll listed nothing even
remotely connected to the Munich crisis as a problem.

As a result, the press covered the Munich Olympic
crisis only briefly, but analysis of the coverage shows it
was spectacular. A false report that the hostages were
rescued in the airfield shoot-out, broadcast as news
only by NBC, served only to heighten the public's
anxious interest and served to increase the news value
of the story.

News organizations shifted interest rapidly from the
Olympic games to the carnage taking place in the village.
Then, when the story lost its news value compared to the
break-in and attempted bugging of the Democratic Party's

national headquarters, they shifted public attention to
Washington D.C. where they covered Watergate.

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C H A P T E R   II

RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1   Research Question

This content analysis of the Munich Olympic crisis coverage in The Economist, Newsweek, Time and U.S. News & World Report and the three U.S. television network evening news programs answers the research question: How was the Munich Olympic crisis of 1972 covered in three U.S. news magazines, one British news magazine, and on the three U.S. television network evening news programs?

2.2   News Magazine Content Analysis Methodology

This study examines one issue each of the four subject news magazines. Although the dates of the issues vary, they were all published one week after the Munich crisis. Nineteen stories were related to the crisis, and a census of the articles constitute the sample.

A comprehensive content analysis of the nineteen articles was undertaken in which volume and percentages were the statistics. Research questions follow the method applied by Professor Tony Atwater of the School of Journalism at Michigan State University in his study of "Network Evening News Coverage of the TWA Hostage Crisis."[1] Specific research questions addressed include the following:

    1)   What was the amount of coverage devoted to the

Munich Olympic crisis in each magazine?

2) What percentage of the total book space in each news magazine was devoted to the Munich Olympic crisis?

3) What percentage of the coverage space was devoted to photographs?

4) What types of stories did crisis reports frequently involve?

5) What topics did the news magazines emphasize in covering the Olympic crisis?

6) What were the sources of the stories about the Munich Olympic crisis?

7) Where did the stories originate?

Amount of coverage -- Article size and photographic content were measured in square inches. Article size was compared to overall book size, which was computed by measuring the square inches of content of a print-only page and multiplying the figure by the number of pages in the magazine without covers. Photographic content was compared to article size. Three of the magazines had pictures of the Munich crisis on the cover. No square inches for photographic coverage or any other coverage were awarded for such a cover, but notation was made of the inclusion or exclusion.

Story Topic -- Each Munich crisis story was coded into one of nine topic categories, which corresponded to the topic principally featured in the report. Topic categories were developed during the preliminary review of the

sources. A topic is defined as the coder's opinion of the primary feature of the story.

Story Source -- Sources were coded into nine categories by type and six categories by location. Stories merely had to refer to a source to be listed in a code, and many stories acknowledged more than one source.

Each story was coded individually onto the code sheet. A sample code sheet follows the list of articles surveyed, which may be found on the next page.

MAGAZINE ARTICLES SURVEYED

The Economist 244, 9 September 1972:

> "Black for Brandt Too"
> "Dear Leila"
> "They are Among Us"
> "The Blackest September"
> "The Show Goes On"
> "The Silent Ones"

Newsweek 80, 18 September 1972:

> "ABC's Grim TV First"
> "Terror at the Olympics"
> "The Terrorist International"

Time 100, 18 September 1972:

> "Black September's Ruthless Few"
> "Confusion in Munich"
> "Israel's Dead Were the Country's Hope"
> "Horror and Death at the Olympics"
> "Rescuing Hostages: To Deal or Not To Deal"

U.S. News & World Report 73, 18 September 1972:

> "Arab Terrorism: Outraged World Seeks an Answer"
> "Can the Olympics Survive?"
> "'Sanctuary'for Terrorists: Can it be Ended?"
> "The Grim Toll Taken by Arab Guerrillas"
> "These are Very Desperate Men"

2.4   MUNICH OLYMPIC CRISIS MAGAZINE ARTICLE CODE SHEET

Magazine Name _____   Date of Issue _____

Index No. _____ Story Title _____

Page Size (Copy) _____ Number of Pages in Magazine _____

Total Square Inches in Magazine _____

VAR 1   Page Story Begins _____

VAR 2   Story Square Inches _____

VAR 3   Number of Black & White Photographs _____

VAR 4   Square Inches of Black & White Photographs _____

VAR 5   Number of Color Photographs _____

VAR 6   Square Inches of Color Photographs _____

VAR 7   Percentage Article Space Used for Photographs _____

VAR 8   Type of Story _____

     1 = News

     2 = Interview

     3 = Historical Explanation

     4 = Opinion

VAR 9   Story Topic _____

     1 = Narrative of Crisis

     2 = Hostage Holder Personality

     3 = Hostage Personality

     4 = Interview With Hostage's Family / Neighbors

     5 = Palestinian Perspective Explained

     6 = Black September Organization

     7 = International Political Complications

     8 = Terrorism

     9 = Olympic Disruption

10 = German Government Official

11 = West German Police

12 = How Media Covered Crisis

-- Sources Used --		Yes	No
VAR 10	Reporter Direct Observation	___	___
VAR 11	West German Government Official	___	___
VAR 12	Palestinian Official	___	___
VAR 13	Israeli Government Official	___	___
VAR 14	Olympic Official	___	___
VAR 15	American Government Official	___	___
VAR 16	Average Citizen Interview	___	___
VAR 17	Arab Official	___	___
VAR 18	Egyptian Official	___	___
VAR 19	Hostage Relatives or Friends	___	___

-- Location of Source --		Yes	No
VAR 20	West Germany	___	___
VAR 21	Israel	___	___
VAR 22	Arab Country / Egypt	___	___
VAR 23	Britain	___	___
VAR 24	United States	___	___

2.5 Network Evening News Content Analysis Methodology

This study examines all the weekday network evening news programs broadcast by ABC, CBS and NBC beginning on September 5, 1972 and ending on September 12, 1972. On September 9, a Saturday, no network evening news was broadcast. On Sunday, September 10, only NBC broadcast an evening news program. Both dates are omitted from the study under the rationale that since neither ABC nor CBS broadcast news on those dates, no comparison can be made.

No actual footage of the network evening news coverage of the Munich Olympic crisis was actually examined. All data were drawn directly from the text of the Television News Index and Abstracts. Although the abstracts are not direct transcripts of the broadcasts, they provide sufficient detail to discern the distinctions necessary for this study.

Research questions again follow the method applied by Professor Tony Atwater in his study of "Network Evening News Coverage of the TWA Hostage Crisis."[2] The specific research questions addressed are:

1) What was the amount of coverage devoted to the Munich Olympic crisis in each network's evening news broadcasts?

2) What types of stories did crisis reports frequently involve?

3) What topics did the evening news broadcasts emphasize in covering the Olympic crisis?

34

4) What percentage of evening news time did the networks devote to the crisis daily?

5) Where did most reports on the Munich Olympic crisis originate?

6) What were the sources of network stories about the Olympic crisis?

"The unit of analysis was the news story[,] which was defined as 'any topic introduced by the anchor person coupled with any report or reports by other correspondents on the same topic and any concluding remarks by the anchor person.' Each news item was coded according to type as either an anchor story, reporter story, or commentary / analysis. [Those stories in which at least half of the narrative copy in the Television News Index and Abstracts was attributed to the anchor were coded as anchor stories.] This typology was used to specify the main presenter of the story and to distinguish news items from commentaries."[3]

Amount of Coverage -- Crisis story length was measured in seconds broadcast per story as tabulated in the Television News Index and Abstracts published by the Joint University Libraries of Vanderbilt University and includes the announcer's lead-in commentary time. Crisis story length was compared to the length of the "news hole," or length of the broadcast devoted to news rather than commercials, which was measured in seconds as tabulated in the same reference.

Story Topic -- Each Munich crisis story was coded into

c e of eighteen topic categories, which corresponded to the topic principally featured in the report. Six stories consisted of approximately half one topic and half another. It was necessary to code each of the six stories into two categories. A topic is defined as the coder's opinion of the primary feature of the story.

Story Origin -- Five categories were used to assign the proximity from which stories were filed on the Munich Olympic crisis. The categories were: (1) United States; (2) West Germany; (3) Israel; (4) Arab Countries; and (5) Great Britain. Stories were placed into categories according to the designation assigned in the Television News Index and Abstracts. Categories 3, ., and 5 were later combined as "Other" because of insignificant individual numbers.

Each network evening news story was coded individually into a code sheet. A sample code sheet may be found on the next page. The three pages following the code sheet comprise the coding manual that accompanies the code sheet.

2.5   NETWORK EVENING NEWS COVERAGE OF THE MUNICH OLYMPIC

CRISIS: STORY CODE SHEET

VAR 1   Story Identification Number _____

VAR 2   Date of Newscast _____

VAR 3   Network Identification _____

VAR 4   Story Type _____

VAR 5   Format _____

VAR 6   Position _____

VAR 7   Topic _____

VAR 8   Duration _____

VAR 9   News Hole _____

VAR 10   Report Total _____

VAR 11   Source Type _____

VAR 12   Location _____

2.7   NETWORK EVENING NEWS COVERAGE OF THE MUNICH OLYMPIC

CRISIS: CODING MANUAL

VAR 1   Story Identification Number assigned in sequence of
coding.

VAR 2   Date of Newscast -- List day & date (ex. Tue 5 Sep)

VAR 3   Network Identification: 1 = ABC

2 = CBS

3 = NBC

VAR 4   Story type (Main Presenter):   1 = Anchor

2 = Reporter

3 = Commentary

VAR 5   Format (Mode of Story Presentation)

1 = Anchor Read Story

2 = Cut to Packaged Report(s) -- one or more
with interviews

3 = Cut to Packaged Report(s) -- without
interviews

4 = Cut to Live Exchange With Reporter

VAR 6   Position (Story Placement in Order of Newscasts)

VAR 7   Topic (Primary Focus of Story)

1 = Narrative of Crisis

2 = Hostage Holder Personality

3 = Hostage Personality

4 = Interview With Hostage Family

5 = Palestinian Perspective Explained

6 = Black September Organization

7 = International Political Complications.

8 = Terrorism

9 = Olympic Disruption

10 = W. German Government Official

11 = W. German Police

12 = How Media are Covering the Crisis

13 = Israeli Reaction

14 = U.S. Reaction

15 = Arab Reaction

16 = Mark Spitz Goes Into Hiding

17 = Olympic Memorial Service

18 = Soviet Reaction

19 = Transportation of Bodies to Israel

20 = Egyptian Reaction

21 = W. German Government Reaction

22 = Israeli Retaliation

23 = David Berger's Burial in Ohio

24 = New Shots Fired in Olympic Village

25 = Arab Funerals in Tripoli, Libya

VAR 8   Duration (Time length of story in seconds)

VAR 9   News Hole (Time length of newscast, excluding

        commercials in seconds)

VAR 10 Report Total (Number of all news stories in

        newscast)

VAR 11 Source Type

        1 = Reporter's Direct Observation

        2 = W. German Government Official

        3 = Palestinian Official

4 = Israeli Government Official

5 = Olympic Official

6 = U.S. Government Official

7 = Average Citizen Interview

8 = Arab (Not Palestinian) / Egyptian Official

9 = Western European Official (Not W. German)

10 = Hostages' Family Members

11 = Olympic Athlete

12 = Vatican

13 = U.N. Secretary General Waldheim

14 = U.S. Presidential Candidate McGovern

15 = Athlete's Neighbors

VAR 12   Location of Source

1 = West Germany

2 = United States

3 = Arab Countries

4 = Israel

5 = Great Britain

40

2.3   Presentation of Study

Chapter III consists of results obtained in the content analysis of news-magazine coverage of the crisis. Chapter IV presents results obtained in the content analysis of network television evening news coverage of the crisis.   Chapter V presents the conclusion, in which inferences about the two studied media presentations are drawn, inferences about the effects of the coverage are drawn, and the statistically supported answer to the research question is presented.

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[2]Atwater, 520-25.

[3]Atwater, 521-22.

CHAPTER III

NEWS MAGAZINE COVERAGE OF THE MUNICH OLYMPIC CRISIS

3.1 Discussion of News Magazine Coverage

This chapter presents the results obtained in content
analysis of the coverage of the Munich Olympic crisis in
The Economist, Newsweek, Time and U.S. News & World Report.

"The opening days of the [Olympic] competition were
marked by controversial decisions and poor officiating.
But all the early problems of the Munich games faded when
eight Arab terrorists killed 11 members of the Israeli team
[on] Sept. (sic) 5."[1] The Olympic crisis also eclipsed
stories of a scandal in George McGovern's Democratic
campaign, which had been accused of seven violations of the
campaign finance law.[2]

The events of the crisis were filled with irony to
which, analysis indicates, the news magazines were
sensitive. The first irony dealt with the German handling
of security for the athletes at the Olympic village.

The Economist asserted: "The positive side of the
1972 Olympics is bound to be buried under Tuesday's
[September 5, 1972] events. In a sense, it was all going
too well; west (sic) Germany's determination to efface
every memory of the militarism of the 1936 Berlin Olympics,
plus the general sense of bonhomie, seem to have
contributed to the laxity of the guards at the village who
allowed the Arab terrorists to climb over the fence,

believing them to be competitors. At the start of the games, security at the village was tighter."[3]

Time explained that the media may have contributed to the lax security afforded the athletes: "Initially, the West Germans planned to restrict entry to the Olympic Village, which was home to 12,000 athletes. But when reporters complained -- and accused the security men of Gestapo tactics -- officials all but abandoned efforts to limit press entry to the village."[4]

Indeed, West Germany's guilty conscience about its recent past may have contributed to the reduction in security. All the magazines except U.S. News & World Report, which limited itself to reporting the most concise news available at the time and a background interview, made the editorial suggestion that the perception of the world that West Germany was no longer militant was an important objective of hosting the Olympics.

> It was supposed to have been the 'happy Olympics' --
> and for ten days, until Tuesday morning, it was. In
> the Olympic village, the atmosphere was cordial, if
> competitive; in the restaurants and cafes on the
> Leopoldstrasse a spirit of happy-go-lucky
> internationalism permeated the tables. As part of the
> conscious exercise to expiate thoughts of Hitler's
> Germany, Israeli competitors were greeted with
> spontaneous applause.[5]

The scars of World War II were less than thirty years old -- so recent that one reporter who covered the Munich Olympics, Leni Riefenstahl, had gained fame by covering the Berlin Olympics, which had been held before World War II began. She had been "one of Adolf Hitler's favorite

actresses and directors. Leni got her biggest break when the Fuhrer told her to make a movie of the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The film that resulted was a propaganda classic, but her career as a movie producer in the Third Reich eventually led to two denazification trials (she was cleared)."[6]

A second irony, that of the murder of Jewish athletes on German soil in the wake of Germany's unforgiven atrocities to the Jewish people, also made sensational copy. It was played upon by _Time_ and _Newsweek_.

"One object of the Olympic summer in Bavaria had been to demonstrate the contrast between the Nazi Germany of 1936 -- the last time the Games were held there -- and the prosperous, benign Germany of today. That image was now dashed, however unfairly, by the brutal murder of eleven Israelis."[7] "The final monstrous twist was that the killings were in Munich, the original spawning ground of Nazism -- and the victims were Jews."[8]

"So it was excruciatingly ironic that the widely praised casual atmosphere played right into the hands of the eight Palestinian terrorists as they made their way unchallenged across the 60-yard expanse from the fence to building 31 on Connollystrasse, climbed to the second-floor rooms occupied by the Israelis, and re-enacted the darkest ritual of German history -- the sharp and ominous knock on the Jews' door."[9]

The knock came at 5:30 a.m.[10], approximately an hour

after the eight Black September gunmen "in a variety of disguises, with machine guns and hand grenades concealed in athletic equipment bags" scaled the six-foot, six-inch chain-link fence around the Olympic Village."[11]

Newsweek and Time described the assault into the Israeli quarters from the perspective of the Israelis who escaped and were interviewed.

> Uncertain how many of the three-room apartments housed Israelis, the intruders knocked on one of the doors and asked in German, 'Is this the Israeli team?' Wrestling coach Moshe Weinberg, 32, opened the door a crack, then threw himself against it when he saw the armed men, and yelled for his roommates to flee. Weinberg was hit by a burst of submachine-gun fire through the door. Boxer Gad Zavary bounced out of bed, broke a window with his elbow and climbed out. 'They fired after me,' he said. 'I heard bullets whistling by my ears.'[12]

> 'I heard the knocking and then a terrible cry,' said Tuvia Sokolsky, a weight-lifting coach who escaped from Building 31. 'But I knew instinctively that it was an Arab attack. Then I heard my friends yelling, "Get out! Escape!" I couldn't open the window, so I broke it and ran out.'[13]

> Virtually the same scene was repeated at a second apartment. Wrestler Joseph Romano apparently fought off the intruding Arabs momentarily with a knife, but he was mortally wounded. Yosef Gottfreund, a 6-ft. 1-in., 240-lb. wrestling referee, held a door shut despite the efforts of five Arabs pushing from the other side. 'Hevra tistalku!' [author's emphasis] Gottfreund yelled in Hebrew. (Boys, get out!). It was too late, when the door was finally forced, for Gottfreund to get out. In all, however, 18 Israelis managed to escape. Nine who did not make it to the exits were taken hostage. They were bound hand and foot in groups of three and pushed together on a bed.[14]

A third irony was complex. The West German government was cornered by the combined forces of Black September's inflexible demands of "freedom for 200 guerrillas held in

Israeli prisons" upon the Israeli government, which was itself inflexible in its refusal even to consider giving in to the Arabs' demands.[15] Chancellor Willi Brandt found himself offering the Arabs "unlimited" ransom and exchange of top West German government officials who volunteered to "take the places of the captive Israelis." The Blacks September gunmen rebuffed his offer.[16]

Time described the negotiations conducted by West German Interior Minister Hans-Dietderich Genscher with the gunmen in heroic terms. The decisions he could make were tightly limited by the constraints imposed on the Germans by the Israeli Knesset: "1) not to negotiate with the terrorists or release any prisoners, 2) to tell the Germans that they had full responsibility for any rescue action and 3) to indicate that Israel would not object should the Germans give the terrorists safe-conduct out of the country -- provided that they received ironclad guarantees that the hostages would be freed."[17]

> Genscher bargained with the terrorists personally,
> (sic) and offered them an unlimited sum of money for
> the release of the Israelis; the Palestinians
> brusquely turned down the offer. Genscher then offered
> himself and other West German officials as hostages in
> the Israelis' place, but again he was rebuffed. . . .
> Genscher boldly demanded to see the hostages. Taken to
> a bedroom in one of the apartments he saw the nine
> bound men sitting on the beds.[18]

Newsweek described the point of exasperation at which Chancellor Brandt decided to ambush the gunmen in an attempt to free as many of the hostages as possible. As Genscher stalled for time,

> Brandt sought the intervention of Egyptian President
> Anwar Sadat. But Brandt could not reach Sadat, and
> Egyptian Premier Aziz Sidky told the Chancellor
> curtly, 'I cannot pre-empt a decision of the
> guerillas. We do not want to get involved in this.'
> And he hung up. Infuriated, Brandt snapped to
> intimates, 'It was totally unsatisfactory. The
> terrorists cannot be allowed to leave.' In fact,
> allowing the Arabs to fly their hostages out of
> Germany was never seriously considered. As one of
> Brandt's aides said, 'We can't simply ship them like
> an air-mail package to an uncertain fate.'[19]

"Reluctantly, Brandt had already made the day's most important decision. He had ruled out completely the possibility of permitting the terrorists to fly away with the prisoners, taking them to what West German authorities were convinced would be certain death. 'That would be impossible for an honorable country to allow to happen,' said the Chancellor. 'We are responsible for the fate of these people.'"[20]

In the days following the crisis, many U.S. officials confided to members of the press their amazement at the way the West Germans decided to handle it. "A typical reaction [cited to U.S. News & World Report, was]: 'Of all the options open to the Germans, they chose the one that was most certain to lead to disaster.'"[21] "Figures released [in later years] by the RAND corporation [support that contention. They] indicate that more hostages die as a result of assaults than by direct killing by terrorists. . . . Assaults as a primary [author's emphasis] strategy do not work; negotiations do."[22]

By Brandt's acceptance of responsibility for the hostages, despite the Israeli and Egyptian governments'

refusal to cooperate, he set himself and his government up for failure. By taking what he thought was a responsible action and shouldering the responsibility for the actions of the eight Black September gunmen, over whom he had no control, he diverted much of the blame for the upcoming airfield massacre to himself. His actions obscured the fact that the blame belonged firmly on the shoulders of the Black September gunmen who took the hostages -- not on those of the people who tried to free the Israelis.[23]

While the facts of the massacre are now clear, at that time "the Germans were convinced that 'the hostages were already dead' [according to Munich Police Chief Manfred Schreiber] -- meaning that their fate had been sealed by the decision not to comply with the terrorists' demands.[24] Given the facts that Black September, Egypt and Israel had managed to shift responsibility for the crisis to the West German government and that Chancellor Brandt had accepted the responsibility, presumably due to a world-wide lack of experience in these matters, it appears the West Germans responded in the only manner they thought was correct.

The Economist apparently went to press without facts about what happened next. The text of its report is filled with transparent innuendo and speculation, through which The Economist's uncertainty about what happened is evident.

> The Germans appear to have made all sorts of proposals,
> including the offer of flying the terrorists to Cairo
> and buying them off with unlimited amounts of money.
> These may or may not have been genuine. The Germans
> have bought the Arabs off before. . . . But this time

48

the Germans kept the raiders bottled up through the
daylight hours in the hope that their nerves would
start to fray as one deadline after another came and
was abandoned. Once it was dark, they got the
terrorists to bring the hostages out, presumably by
telling them their terms had been accepted, and flew
them to an airfield they had never seen before where an
ambush had been arranged. So far so good; and if it
had been either the Israeli security forces or the FBI
who were doing it[,] that would have probably been
that. But it went wrong. Perhaps the Arabs were given
enough time to realise (sic) they had been deceived;
perhaps the Germans did not have enough real marksmen
in the right places; perhaps both.[25]

The American news magazines, as exemplified in this

succinct passage from U.S. News & World Report, took a more

positive position on the news they had gathered.

West German officials, bargaining with the gunmen,
convinced them that they would be sent to Cairo along
with the hostages. This was a desperate ruse, (sic) to
get the guerrillas to an airfield where an ambush was
set up.[26]

The West Germans considered two assault plans to take

place at the Olympic village before deciding to ambush the

gunmen at the airfield. The first to be considered and

abandoned "was a lightning raid on the building, launched

either by pulling a gun during the talks or sending sweat-

suited police down from the roofs. But an Arab leader

discouraged any shooting by holding a hand grenade during

all negotiating sessions."[27]

A second plan would have been to offer the guerrillas a
helicopter for an escape with their captives, then try
to gun them down in the open as they moved from the
building to the helicopters. But this idea was
thwarted when the Arabs demanded a bus to the
helicopter. Finally there was only one course of
action: to fly the Arabs and their hostages to an
airport and attempt to ambush them there.[28]

"A 727 was flown to Furstenfeldbruck, a West German

49

airbase 16 miles outside Munich. No crew could be found that was willing to take the plane out again loaded with Arabs and Israelis; that scarcely mattered, since the Germans did not intend for them to leave."[29] "At first they considered putting agents aboard the jet to pose as crew members who would then overpower the Arabs -- but the security men balked at such a 'death assignment.'"[30]

The Economist, whose coverage consisted heavily of editorializing about what the West Germans should have done, was vituperative in its criticism of the German policemen who refused the combat inside the jet. "The men who were supposed to place themselves inside the plane to deal with the Black September group at close quarters were actually allowed to cry off after voting on whether they were prepared to take the risk -- an action that would be defined as mutiny in most police forces."[31]

Of the other three news magazines, only Newsweek even made mention of the policemen's refusal. No magazine printed the view of a senior Munich police official who "backed his men by stating that they were 'not trained or mentally equipped for this sort of kamikaze work[,] and we have no right to ask them to do it, particularly since the Israelis were adamant that they would not release any of the 200 Arab prisoners.'"[32]

The three American news magazines gave detailed accounts of the transfer of gunmen and hostages to the airfield and the disastrous ambush attempt. The Economist

merely discussed the failure of the ambush and criticized
the Germans for doing everything wrong.

> At 10 p.m., nearly 18 hours after they had started
> their assault, the eight guerrillas herded their
> prisoners, who were now tied together in chain fashion
> and blindfolded, out of the building and into a gray
> German army bus. They were driven through a tunnel
> under the village to a strip of lawn 275 yards away
> that had been converted into an emergency helicopter
> pad. Two choppers took the Arabs and their hostages on
> a 25-minute ride to Furstenfeldbruck airport; a third
> preceded them, carrying German officials and Israeli
> intelligence men.[33]

> Officials discovered for the first time that there were
> eight members in the commando group. All day the
> Germans had believed that there were only four or five
> terrorists -- and so they had set their trap with only
> five snipers. Now they needed not only uncanny
> shooting, (sic) but also a virtually impossible stroke
> of luck. Five snipers had to hit eight Arabs in the
> precious seconds before a guerrilla could turn on the
> hostages.[34]

Only _Time_ went so far as to describe the impossible

position in which the surprised German police sharpshooters

found themselves.

> When the helicopters set down at Furstenfeldbruck, two
> Arabs hopped out and walked over to check out the 727.
> Two more jumped out and, although they had promised not
> to use Germans as hostages, ordered the helicopter
> crews to get out and stand by their choppers. The
> sharpshooters -- three of them posted in the control
> tower 40 yards from the helicopters and the other two
> on the field -- had been instructed to fire whenever
> the Arabs presented the greatest number of targets. The
> cautious terrorists never exposed more than four of
> their number at a time. To complicate matters, the
> local police sharpshooters had turned down infra-red
> sniperscopes offered by the West German army because
> they had never been trained to use them. They sighted
> through regular scopes at a field illuminated by
> floodlights and stippled by shadows. Nonetheless, one
> marksman squeezed off a round and the others quickly
> followed suit.[35]

> Two Arabs left the helicopters and examined the
> airliner. As they started back toward the helicopters,
> the police opened fire. As the gun battle raged, one

of the Arabs hurled a grenade into a helicopter, setting it ablaze. Another gunned down hostages. When it was over, all nine Israelis, five of the Arabs and a West German policeman were dead. Three of the Arabs were captured.[36]

Then came what Newsweek parochially termed "perhaps the most unnecessary and inexplicable blunder of the day. By 11 p.m. there were reports of gunshots at the airport. Minutes later, Munich was celebrating the joyful news that all the Arabs had been shot and the hostages miraculously escaped."[37] "In Europe headlines announced the release of the Munich hostages, and in Israel people went to bed thinking that they [-- the hostages --] had been saved."[38]

The West German information blunder, while arguably serious and unnecessary, was by no means the biggest mistake made that day. Of all the mistakes, it was probably the only one made by the Germans that did not contribute directly to the killings. Conrad Ahlers' failure was ignored by both The Economist and U.S. News & World Report, but it was exploited in the copy of both Time and Newsweek.

> It is difficult to put much of the blame on newsmen. Indeed, many reporters, barred from the climactic scene, hesitated when word of the captives' safe release first came from the Bavarian state police, who were responsible for security at the airport in Furstenfeldbruck. A few journalists were apparently misled when a local pub owner, Ludwig Pollack, passed a rumor near the airport gate that the terrorists had been seized; from this it was inferred that the hostages were safe. But it was only after receiving confirmation from Conrad Ahlers, official spokesman for the West German government, that many reporters sent firm -- and wrong -- stories out to the world.[39]

But in Germany, officials soon knew that the initial
reports from Bavarian police had been outrageously
inaccurate; yet another three hours dragged by before
the tragedy of Furstenfeldbruck was revealed to the
world. . . . Finally at 3 a.m., Bavarian Interior
Minister Bruno Merk announced the terrible news. The
rescue plan had failed. Nine innocent Israeli athletes
and sports officials were dead at the airport.[40]

Jordan's King Hussein offered his condolences to the

athletes' families in a broadcast on Amman radio. An

Egyptian government spokesman made the wild accusation that

"'the commandos and the Israeli hostages were killed in a

German ambush, by German bullets and in a U.S. base in

Germany.'"[41]

The Egyptian claims were wrong in two respects.

First, Furstenfeldbruck is a German airbase. Second, the

autopsies of the bodies showed that all but one of the

Israeli athletes were killed by bullets from Kalashnikov

assault rifles of the type used by the Arab gunmen. The

other one died of smoke inhalation. Of the five dead

Arabs, all but one were killed by German sharpshooters'

bullets. The other killed himself accidentally with the

hand grenade he threw into one of the helicopters. The

West German policeman was killed by a shot in the head from

an Arab's weapon.[42]

These observations are offered to the student of news

history. Research of the Munich Olympic crisis in the four

news magazines indicates the most concise report of the

events of the day may be found in U.S. News & World Report.

The most comprehensive reports about the events of the day,

the decisions made, the options that were abandoned and

why, and discussions of the characters involved were printed in _Time_ and _Newsweek_. _Newsweek's_ coverage was the most visually appealing due to its extensive use of color photographs. The most complete discussion of what should have happened but didn't, presented without the confusion that hard facts uncovered by hard-working reporters would introduce, is presented in _The Economist_.

3.2 The Data

The results of the statistical analysis are presented in the order of the specific research questions posed about the magazine coverage in the methodology of the study. The questions are:

1) What was the amount of coverage devoted to the Munich Olympic crisis in each magazine?

2) What percentage of the total book space in each news magazine was devoted to the Munich Olympic crisis?

3) What percentage of the coverage space was devoted to photographs?

4) What types of stories did crisis reports frequently involve?

5) What topics did the news magazines emphasize in covering the Munich Olympic crisis?

6) What were the sources of the stories about the Olympic crisis?

7) Where did the stories originate?

3.3 Explanation of Table 1

Table 1 depicts the amount of coverage each of the subject magazines devoted to the Munich Olympic crisis. The accepted measure of coverage is in column inches, but accurate measurement of the coverage would have been impossible using that unit of measure in this case. The columns of the three U.S. news magazines are of comparable width, but those of The Economist are nearly twice as wide as those of the U.S. news magazines. The decision was made to use square inches as the unit of measure. This is an accurate measure because the print size of all three magazines is similar and because accurate ratios between page size and article size were easy to compute.

The size in square inches of the printed space on a print-only page was determined by measuring the print block from margin to margin vertically and horizontally. Measurements of the square inches of crisis stories were divided by that of a print-only page to obtain the number of pages devoted to Munich crisis stories.

A story was defined as a block of words obviously separated from the preceding story by its headline and positioning on the page and having a direct relationship to the Munich Olympic crisis. This measure turned out to be the most inverse statistic of the study. Note that while The Economist had the largest number of stories, it devoted the smallest amount of space and pages to coverage of the crisis. Newsweek, on the other hand, had the smallest

number of stories but the most pages of coverage.

TABLE 1

AMOUNT OF MAGAZINE COVERAGE DEVOTED TO CRISIS

	ECONMST	NEWSWK	TIME	U.S.NWS	ALL
Number of Crisis Stories	6	3	5	5	19
Page First Story Began	12	24	22	16	--
Sq.in./pg.	71.25	75	75	75	--
Sq.in. of Crisis Stories	347.5	911.25	643.75	370.75	2,273.25
Pages of Crisis Stories	4.88	12.15	8.58	4.94	30.55

X_2 (Computed for Sq.in. of crisis stories) = 368.79, df = 3

3.4 Explanation of Table 2

Table 2 depicts the percentage of total available space that each of the subject news magazines devoted to coverage of the Munich Olympic crisis. Computation of total available space was done by multiplying the square inches of a print-only page by the number of pages in the magazine and eliminating inside and outside covers.

The percentage of the magazine used for coverage of the Munich crisis was determined by dividing the square inches used for crisis coverage by the square inches available in the magazine.

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE OF SPACE DEVOTED TO CRISIS

	ECONMST	NEWSWK	TIME	U.S.NWS	ALL
Total sq.in. available in magazine	7,837.5	8,700	7,650	6,900	22,474.5
Sq.in. used in crisis coverage	347.5	911.25	643.75	370.75	2,273.25
Percentage	4.43%	10.5%	8.4%	5.4%	10.1%

X_2 (Computed for Percentages) = 3.24, df = 3

3.5 Explanation of Table 3

Table 3 depicts the amount of coverage space used for photographs in the four subject news magazines. Photographs were counted and measured to the nearest quarter inch for ease of computation.

The photographs of the Munich Olympic crisis were dramatic depictions of tension during the hostage holding and of anguish following the disastrous gunfight at Furstenfeldbruck airfield. Newsweek, of all the magazines, capitalized on the display of photographs the most. Although Time had one more photograph than Newsweek, Newsweek was the only magazine that offered color photographs, and it did so in a spectacular four-page layout. It also used more of its coverage space than any of the other magazines for pictures.

The square inches of pictures were divided by the square inches of the coverage to obtain the percentage of coverage devoted to pictures. No credit was given for a picture of the crisis on the cover of the magazine, but notation was made that all the magazines except U.S. News & World Report put a picture of the crisis on the cover.

TABLE 3

PHOTOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

	ECONMST	NEWSWK	TIME	U.S.NWS	ALL
No. black & white photographs	4	13	25	8	50
No. color photographs		11			11
Sq.in. used for crisis coverage	347.5	911.25	643.75	370.75	2,273.25
Sq.in. of story used for pictures	23.5	442	122.25	69.25	662
Percentage of coverage devoted to pictures	8.2%	48.5%	19%	18.7%	29.1%
Picture of crisis on cover	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	--

X_2 (Computed for percent coverage in pictures) = 38.24, df = 3

3.6 Explanation of Table 4

Table 4 depicts the distribution of the types of
stories that were emphasized in coverage of the Munich
Olympic crisis by the subject news magazines. The first
problem, of course, was to define the types of stories.
This, particularly in the case of Newsweek, led to some
perplexing forced-choice decisions. Newsweek covered all
the categories, but the primary thrust of its articles fit
the definition of a news story.

A news story was defined as an article in which the
primary purpose was to narrate the events of the crisis or
of events directly related to the crisis. An opinion was
defined as an article in which the primary purpose was to
express the writer's position or to suggest a solution to
terrorist-type events. Historical articles were defined as
those articles with the primary purpose of explaining the
historical events that led to the Munich Olympic crisis.
The single interview was defined as a narrative of a
conversation between the reporter and a specific person
being questioned about the Munich Olympic crisis.

Decisions about the primary gist of the articles were,
admittedly, subjective on the part of the coder, but were
made with the definitions of the categories firmly in mind.

The data support the observation that most of the
stories were narratives of the crisis, and that although
U.S. News & World Report had fewer news stories about the
crisis, its coverage displayed the widest variety of types

of stories. The data also support the observation that _Newsweek_ and _Time_ concentrated their efforts more heavily on the events surrounding the Munich crisis than did their competitors.

TABLE 4

TYPES OF STORIES

	ECONMST	NEWSWK	TIME	U.S.NWS	ALL
News Story	3	3	4	2	12
Opinion	2		1	1	4
Historical	1			1	2
Interview				1	1

Table 5 depicts the distribution of major story topics found in the news-magazine coverage of the Munich Olympic crisis. Nine topics were identified, and each article was coded into one of the topic categories. The decision of which category the article fit was based on the coder's judgment of the primary topic addressed in the article and was a forced choice.

The percentage of coverage devoted to each topic was determined by adding the square inches of all the articles devoted to a topic and dividing that total by the total square inches devoted to the Munich crisis in all four news magazines.

Narratives of the crisis took up more than half the coverage space. The second-greatest amount of space was devoted to the topic of international terrorism, which took more than a fifth of the coverage space. More individual stories were devoted to the topic of international terrorism than to any other topic. All the news magazines devoted at least one story to the topic of international terrorism. These are important figures because they demonstrate the gatekeepers' growing awareness of the importance of the "terrorism" story to their news magazines.

Note also that The Economist did not include a narrative of the Olympic crisis in its coverage, while all three U.S. news magazines did. The Economist was the only

one of the news magazines to devote an article to the international political complications created by the crisis and was the only news magazine that devoted an entire article to a West German government official. The data support the observation that while U.S. news magazines were intent on telling what went on during the crisis, The Economist was more intent on offering explanations, criticisms and conjecture about possibilities that were ignored and should have been explored.

TABLE 5

STORY TOPICS

	ECONMST	NEWSWK	TIME	U.S.NWS	PERCENTAGE CRISIS SQ.IN.
Narrative of Crisis		1	1	1	52.4%
International Terrorism	2	1	1	2	21.4%
Black September Organization	1		1		7.5%
Media Coverage of the Crisis		1	1		5.6%
Olympic Disruption	1			1	4.7%
Hostage Personality			1		2.8%
Palestinian Perspective Explanation				1	2.8%
International Political Complications	1				1.4%
German Govt. Official	1				1.4%

2.8 Explanation of Table 6

Table 6 depicts the distribution of sources mentioned in the articles of the subject news magazines in their coverage of the Munich Olympic crisis. In order to be coded into a category, an article merely had to mention its source or sources.

While Israeli government officials and West German government officials were cited as sources in an equal number of cases, the West German government official sources were cited by each of the four subject news magazines. U.S. News & World Report did not cite an Israeli government official for its coverage.

Combination of the two categories "Middle East (Not Israeli or Palestinian) Government Official" and "Palestinian Official" shows that The Economist, Newsweek and Time did much to balance the sources used in the coverage. The two categories combine to a total of 5, which equals the number of Israeli and West German government officials and is greater than the number of U.S. government officials cited. The data support the observation that Arab and Egyptian points of view were expressed in the coverage of the crisis.

TABLE 6

TYPE OF SOURCE

	ECONMST	NEWSWK	TIME	U.S.NWS	ALL
Israeli Government Official	1	2	2		5
West German Government Official	2	1	1	1	5
Middle East (Not Israeli or Palestinian) Government Official	1	1	1		3
Olympic Official		1		1	2
Palestinian Official	1	1			2
Western European (not German) Govt. Official		1		1	2
Olympic Athlete		1			1
Reporter Interviewed				1	1

2.9 Explanation of Table 7

Table 7 depicts the distribution of countries in which news-magazine stories of the Munich Olympic crisis originated. Stories were coded by mention of the country of origin, and as a result many stories were coded into more than one category.

The most frequently mentioned country of origin was West Germany, where the crisis took place. The second-most frequently mentioned country of origin was the United States. The inference that this phenomenon was the result of the location of publication is supported by the fact that the U.S. news magazines mentioned no British sources, and the British news magazine mentioned no U.S. sources.

Sources in Arab countries and in Israel are mentioned in an equal number of articles, supporting the observation that, at this particular point in history, the news magazines collectively attempted to present as many sides of the issue as possible. The glaring exceptions are the lack of a single story with Israel as a point of origin in either The Economist or U.S. News & World Report, the lack of an Arabian point of origin in Newsweek, and the fact that Time cited an Arab country as the point of origin in one story and Israel in three.

Great Britain was cited twice -- but only in The Economist. The data support the inference that editors believed the ideas of their own government officials would be of more interest to their readers than those of

70

officials of other governments that were not involved in the crisis.

TABLE 7

ORIGIN OF STORY

	ECONMST	NEWSWK	TIME	U.S.NWS	ALL
West Germany	3	2	3	2	10
United States		2	3	3	8
Arab Countries	1		1	2	4
Israel		1	3		4
Great Britain	2				2
Italy		..	1		1

3.10 Description of Magazine Coverage

Newsweek's flamboyant coverage of the Munich crisis consisted of a 12.15-page spread that included a four-page, full-color layout of photographs. Its three stories occupy 10.5 percent of the magazine and are all classified as news stories. They constitute 40 percent of the total coverage of all four magazines. Photographs comprise 48.5 percent of the crisis coverage in Newsweek.

Time's 8.4-page spread, 19 percent of which is photographs, represents 28.3 percent of total news-magazine coverage studied. U.S. News & World Report devoted 4.94 pages to the coverage, of which 18.7 percent was black-and-white photographs. The Economist covered the crisis with 4.33 pages of austere copy, which was broken up by only four photographs that took up 3.2 percent of the space. U.S. News & World Report and Time represent 16.3 percent and 15.3 percent of the total news-magazine coverage respectively.

One of the more interesting statistics is obscure. Six opinions and news stories about international terrorism were printed in the four magazines. The subject occupies no less than 21.4 percent of the total news-magazine space devoted to the crisis coverage, and it is the second-most highly emphasized story of the crisis.

This statistic when taken in isolation indicates that the Munich crisis fostered a high level of interest in the subject. All the articles dealt primarily with the actions

73

of Palestinian "terrorist" organizations. It s notable

that the story was able to compete effectively for space in

the magazines with the events of the Vietnam War, in which

Americans were dying every day.

The preponderance of the magazine coverage, as one

might expect, was news stories. Opinions, historical

explanations and interviews followed in sequence of space

devoted to the coverage.

Most of the acknowledged sources were West German

government officials, and most of the sources were in West

Germany. Although no sources were cited in the United

States by The Economist, the second-most frequently cited

location of sources was the United States. None of the

U.S. news magazines cited a single British source.

1"Summer Olympics: Munich Games, Marred by
Controversial Decisions, Terrorist Tragedy, End; U.S.S.R.
Wins Most Medals," Facts on File 32 (September 10-16,
1972), 728.

2Television News Index and Abstracts, ed. James B.
Plinkington, Vanderbilt Television News Archive (Nashville,
Tennessee: Joint University Libraries, September 1972):
1481.

3"The Show Goes On," The Economist 244 (September 9,
1972): 32.

4"Horror and Death at the Olympics," Time 100
(September 18, 1972): 22.

5"The Show Goes on," 32.

6"People," Time 100 (September 4, 1972): 34.

7"Horror and Death at the Olympics," 22.

8"Horror and Death at the Olympics," 22.

[9]"Terror at the Olympics," Newsweek 80 (September 18, 1972): 24.

[10]"Arab Terrorists Kill 11 Israelis at Olympics; 5 Commandos Die in Airport Gun Battle," Facts on File 32 (September 3-9, 1972): 693.

[11]"Terror at the Olympics," 24.

[12]"Horror and Death at the Olympics," 23.

[13]"Terror at the Olympics," 24.

[14]"Horror and Death at the Olympics," 23.

[15]"Arab Terrorism -- Outraged World Seeks an Answer," U.S. News & World Report 73 (September 18, 1972): 13.

[16]"Terror at the Olympics," 29.

[17]"Horror and Death at the Olympics," 27.

[18]"Horror and Death at the Olympics," 27.

[19]"Terror at the Olympics," 29.

[20]"Horror and Death at the Olympics," 27.

[21]"Washington Whispers," U.S. News & World Report 73 (September 18, 1972): 11.

[22]Abraham H. Miller, Terrorism and Hostage Negotiations (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), 37-38.

[23]Robert James Bidinotto, "Terrorism and Unilateral Global Disarmament," in Terrorism and the Media, ed. Bettina Bien Greaves (Irvington-on-Hudson, New York: The Foundation for Economic Education, Inc., 1986), 7.

[24]"Horror and Death at the Olympics," 27.

[25]"They are Among Us," The Economist 244 (September 9, 1972), 14.

[26]"Arab Terrorism -- Outraged World Seeks an Answer," 18.

[27]"Terror at the Olympics," 30.

[28]"Terror at the Olympics," 30.

[29] "Horror and Death at the Olympics," 28.

[30] "Terror at the Olympics," 30.

[31] "The Anti-terrorists," The Economist 244 (September 16, 1972): 16.

[32] Clive C. Aston, A Contemporary Crisis (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982), 79.

[33] "Horror and Death at the Olympics," 28.

[34] "Terror at the Olympics," 31.

[35] "Horror and Death at the Olympics," 28-29.

[36] "Arab Terrorism -- Outraged World Seeks an Answer," 18.

[37] "Terror at the Olympics," 31.

[38] "Confusion in Munich," Time 100 (September 18, 1972): 50.

[39] "Confusion in Munich," 50.

[40] "Terror at the Olympics," 31.

[41] "Horror and Death at the Olympics," 30.

[42] "Munich Autopsies Show Shots Killed 10 of 11 Israelis," New York Times, 13 September 1972, 4(A).

CHAPTER IV

NETWORK TELEVISION EVENING NEWS COVERAGE

OF THE MUNICH OLYMPIC CRISIS

4.1 Discussion of the Coverage

This chapter presents results obtained in content
analysis of the coverage of the Munich Olympic crisis in
the network evening news programs of ABC, CBS and NBC.

The night before the Olympic crisis, ABC led its
evening news broadcast with three stories about the
McGovern campaign, one of which held promise of becoming a
scandal. The Republican National Committee chairman,
Senator Robert Dole, accused the Democrats of seven
violations of the campaign finance law, including the
acceptance of a gift of $50,000 from Hugh Hefner, the
colorful publisher of Playboy magazine. The majority of
the rest of ABC's broadcast consisted of news about battles
and bombings in Vietnam.[1]

CBS led its evening news broadcast with an interview
of Supreme Court Justice William Douglas who stated his
belief that the war in Vietnam was being conducted
unconstitutionally by the President. It followed the
interview with a battle story from Vietnam and coverage of
the McGovern campaign. CBS broadcast Senator Dole's
charges of Democratic financial violations halfway through
the program.[2]

NBC also broadcast three stories about the McGovern

campaign that night. The third one was the campaign-finance-violation story. Stories about minority political interests and the Olympics, in which Mark Spitz had just won his seventh gold medal, preceded the Vietnam stories of the night.[3]

People in the United States went to bed after another humdrum night of news about the presidential-election campaign and the seemingly endless Vietnam War. Americans could take some pride in the young Jewish athlete who had won more Olympic gold medals than anyone had ever won before, and those who watched ABC's exclusive sports coverage of the Olympic games could look forward to the next day's competitions. "Ratings for ABC's Olympic coverage were astonishingly high -- nearly half of all households in some key U.S. cities [were tuned to the] . . . . network's nightly three-hour feed to its prime-time audience."[4]

ABC's sports coverage was good enough to win anchor Jim McKay an Emmy in 1973 for "outstanding individual achievement in sports broadcasting."[5]

> ABC had come to cover the Olympics with the most sophisticated electronic equipment available and a score of highly paid announcers and commentators. The Olympic coverage was visually stunning. And (sic) ABC's 'tell it like it is' commentary went refreshingly beyond the bland bounds of conventional sports reporting. Only once did a sharp tongue get really out of line, when [Howard] Cosell conducted a badgering interview with Stan Wright, the coach who had already shouldered the blame for failing to get two U.S. sprinters to the track on time.[6]

McKay was destined to win a second Emmy for his work

at Munich, one that is unusual for a sports announcer to receive. He got that Emmy for taking charge of ABC's news operation as it covered the Olympic crisis,[7] but the coverage was not without its problems.

> ABC, which had won coverage rights to the Olympic games, started with a clear edge over its competitors. It had both a staff on the scene and a near monopoly of the transatlantic satellite. Thus it was ironic that ABC, which does not normally air network programs before noon, was the last of the TV networks to broadcast the initial news of the terrorist raid.[8]

The television coverage of the crisis was necessarily different from the magazine coverage. "While print addresses itself mainly to the intellectual understanding of the reader, television, which is colourful (sic), moving, [and] more picture than sound[,] seems to be able to bypass consciousness. As such a 'deep' medium television lends itself strongly to identification processes in the watcher."[9]

Of course, the identification process cannot take place unless the story is being broadcast, and getting the story turned out to be "an exercise in frustration, particularly for the TV networks, which were trying to provide up-to-the-minute reports."[10]

"By 6 a.m. Munich police, alerted to the situation by escaping Israelis, had arrived and begun to take the measure of the situation."[11] "The Olympic village was completely cordoned off. Over one hundred extra policemen and soldiers arrived from as far away as Hanover, but most remained in their trucks as no one had received any orders

79

as to what to do with them."[12]   "It was already apparent

that they were closing up the village to press and

television."[13]

> By 8:00 a.m., news of the siege had been broadcast by
> Bavarian radio, and some of the four thousand
> journalists and two thousand television reporters
> covering the games began to converge on gate 21. The
> television camera over the Olympic Stadium half a mile
> away was trained on Building 31 and focused on the
> room where the hostages were being held. Occasionally
> it would zoom back to show the police moving into
> position. At other times it focused on one of the
> hostage-takers (sic) who appeared on the balcony and
> waved.[14]

Many journalists displayed remarkable cunning as they

subverted the German attempt to block their access to the

site of the crisis. They were able to exploit the

situation created by the "84-year-old Olympics czar Avery

Brundage [who] kept [the Games] going for unseemly hours

after the Israeli hostages were being held at gunpoint."[15]

Although the media and the public in general were

denied access to the area around building 31, "exception

was being made to allow athletes and officials inside the

perimeter. Or rather anyone who was dressed like an

athlete. Paul Rhodda, a journalist with the Guardian still

found that 'by putting on my running gear and jogging

through the crowds, it was possible to find entrance.'"[16]

> As German police closed a cordon around the embattled
> village that morning, two ABC reporters -- Peter
> Jennings and Howard Cosell -- managed to get inside
> the gates and stay there. Jennings -- ABC's Middle
> East bureau chief, who had been sent to Munich for a
> change of pace -- quickly led a camera crew into the
> building opposite the Israeli quarters. Smiling,
> bluffing and cajoling the Italians who lived there, he
> found himself a perch on the roof. When the police
> moved in to remove all remaining journalists, Jennings

locked himself in a bathroom and escaped detection.
Cosell remained in the nearby Place des Nations simply
by being himself, threatening all who challenged him
with the undying disgrace of a Cosell putdown.[17]

"Gary Slaughter, a young American on the temporary ABC
staff, put on a sweat suit and became the lifeline to the
village. Establishing himself as an athlete in the minds
of the guards, and bearing an athlete's credential, he
carried film and other supplies into and out of the village
for long hours. Gary, black and athletic-looking, was very
believable."[18]

Resourceful journalists used many other ruses and
disguises with varying degrees of success to pass through
the police cordon. One that bears mention was Jacques
Lesgardes' successful ploy.

> Jacques removed the ABC identification from the
> Volkswagen minibus that held the mobile camera [it was
> a minicam -- a piece of new technology in 1972].
> Across the road, he spotted an ice cream wagon, like a
> Good Humor truck, that was parked there all the time,
> selling ice cream to ABC personnel and athletes on
> their way to the village. Jacques made a deal with the
> ice cream man[,] and soon the mobile unit was in its
> disguise, ready to move inside the gates.[19]

As a result of the television reporters' efforts, all
three networks were able to cover the Munich crisis with
varying degrees of success. This observation is supported
by the statistical portion of the study.

The Munich Olympic crisis was "one of the hottest
stories of the year."[20] It dominated the network evening
news of all three networks from September 5 until September
11 despite the fact that the shooting was over and the word
of the disaster at the airfield was out by 3:30 a.m. (West

German time) of the second day.

All three networks dropped the story about the McGovern campaign financial violations, but they all also showed remarkable foresight in dealing with another story. On September 5, the day the Munich crisis became news in the United States, all three networks broadcast their first stories about a break-in at the Democratic National Headquarters at Watergate. ABC and CBS reported that night that President Nixon denied any knowledge of the break-in, and NBC reported former Attorney General John Mitchell's assertion that no high official had any connection with the bugging attempt at Watergate.[21]

The Watergate story was initially eclipsed in news value by the events at Munich, but it became the number-one story on ABC and CBS on September 11.[22] NBC played it eighth on that date behind a series of catch-up stories on the Vietnam War.[23]

4.2 The Data

The results are presented in the order necessary to answer the specific research questions of the methodology. The questions are:

1) What was the amount of coverage devoted to the Munich Olympic crisis in each network's evening news broadcasts?

2) What types of stories did crisis reports frequently involve?

3) What topics did the evening news broadcasts
emphasize in covering the Olympic crisis?

4) What percentage of evening news time did the
networks devote to the crisis daily?

5) Where did most reports on the Munich Olympic
crisis originate?

6) What were the sources of network stories about the
Olympic crisis?

All data were obtained from the <u>Television News Index
and Abstracts</u> published at Vanderbilt University.

4.3 Explanation of Table 8

This table depicts the relative length in seconds of
the three networks' news holes during coverage of the
Munich Olympic crisis. The news hole is defined as that
portion of the news broadcast not devoted to commercials.

September 9 and 10 were eliminated from the study
because they are Saturday and Sunday. During the weekends
of 1972, only NBC broadcast an evening news program on
Sunday night. The decision was made to disregard the
weekend data because it would be impossible to make
a relevant comparision.

The data indicate that NBC had the largest news hole,
and ABC had the smallest.

TABLE 8

SECONDS OF NETWORK NEWS HOLE

NEWSCAST DAY	ABC	CBS	NBC	ALL
September 5	1,240	1,460	1,370	4,070
September 6	1,300	1,370	1,380	4,050
September 7	1,290	1,380	1,350	4,020
September 8	1,300	1,380	1,430	4,110
September 11	1,220	1,390	1,400	4,010
September 12	1,350	1,380	1,450	4,180
Total	7,700	8,360	8,380	24,440

$x^2 = 36.8$, df = 2

4.4   Explanation of Table 9

Table 9 depicts the number of individual Munich crisis reports broadcast by the networks during each day of the coverage.   The data were obtained from the <u>Television News Index and Abstracts</u>, in which the individual stories are clearly separated.

TABLE 9

NUMBER OF CRISIS REPORTS

NEWSCAST DAY	ABC	CBS	NBC	ALL
September 5	5	4	6	15
September 6	9	12	11	32
September 7	4	3	2	9
September 8	2	3	2	7
September 11	2	1	1	4
September 12	1	1	4	6
Total	23	24	26	73

$x^2 = .19$, df = 2

4.5 Explanation of Table 10

Table 10 depicts the seconds of the news hole devoted
to the Munich Olympic crisis during each day of the
coverage.

The data support the observation that NBC devoted more
news time to coverage of the Munich crisis than either ABC
or CBS. These data are somewhat surprising in view of the
fact that "because of its exclusive Olympic franchise, ABC
had its rivals badly outgunned. To counter the well
equipped ABC forces, CBS had only two commentators on hand.
. . . And (sic) NBC was so unprepared that it was reduced
to relaying much of its spotty coverage back to New York by
telephone."[24]

TABLE 10

SECONDS OF CRISIS REPORTS

NEWSCAST DAY	ABC	CBS	NBC	ALL
September 5	860	720	890	2,470
September 6	830	1,090	1,280	3,200
September 7	560	530	460	1,550
September 8	160	190	130	480
September 11	170	30	270	470
September 12	120	140	320	580
Total	2,700	2,700	3,350	8,750

$X^2 = 96.6$, df = 2

4.6 Explanation of Table 11

Table 11 depicts the distribution of story types categorized as either anchor, reporter or commentary / analysis.

In order to be characterized as an anchor story, at least half of the text in the <u>Television News Index and Abstracts</u>, which is not an exact transcript of the program, had to be devoted to the anchor person. Those in which less than half the text was devoted to the anchor were coded as reporter stories.

Nearly half the stories were anchor stories, but reporter stories also were frequent. The data depicted in this table are similar to the data obtained by Atwater in his study of the TWA hostage crisis of 1985. Two notable exceptions are the preponderance of reporter stories by ABC, and the fact that the majority of NBC's stories, even though NBC devoted more news time of a larger news hole to the Olympic crisis, were anchor stories.

The difference in the types of stories between the three networks is most likely related to two factors.

First was their relative preparedness in Munich as mentioned in the explanation of Table 10. ABC had significant advantages because of the sophisticated electronic equipment and the first-rate team of experienced sportscasters and news personnel it brought to Munich.[25]

The second factor had to do with access to satellite time. Access to satellites is a limited commodity, and ABC

had a monopoly on the transatlantic communications satellite for the first five hours of the story. ABC refused a CBS request for pool coverage of the crisis during ABC's exclusive satellite time. When ABC was forced to give up its satellite access to CBS, CBS returned the discourtesy.[26]

> CBS used the satellite to report the story on its midday newscasts. Then it received an unforeseen chance to get back at ABC. Brazil had booked the satellite for a basketball game, (sic) but had no need for it with all sports postponed. Under international rules, time that is booked and not used is granted to the last satellite customer. CBS took advantage, accepted the time -- and used the satellite to transmit to New York the tape of a soccer game that was never intended for airing back in the states.[27]

ABC regained access to the satellite in time to broadcast the story of the disaster of the bungled ambush at the Furstenfeldbruck airfield. ABC was on the satellite at 3:30 a.m. Munich time when the official announcement was made that the hostages were dead, and anchor Jim McKay was the first to broadcast the news to the United States.[28]

TABLE 11

CRISIS REPORTS BY STORY TYPE, IN PERCENT

STORY TYPE	ABC	CBS	NBC	ALL
Anchor	30.4	41.7	69.2	47.9
Reporter	52.2	54.2	26.9	43.8
Commentary / Analysis	17.4	4.2	3.8	8.2

$X^2 = 125.3$, df $=4$

4.7   Explanation of Table 12

Table 12 depicts the distribution of story topics
broadcast over the six-day coverage period of the Munich
Olympic crisis. Some of the stories listed in the
Television News Index and Abstracts covered more than one
topic. The seventy-nine story topics were coded into
eighteen categories.

Narratives of the crisis were the most frequent story
topic. They were followed closely by stories about
international terrorism. CBS devoted more stories to the
topic of international terrorism than to any other single
story topic.

NBC, which had the least capability on the scene in
Munich, broadcast more narratives of the crisis than ABC,
which had the best capability on the scene. The fact that
Jim McKay of ABC won an Emmy award for his coverage of the
crisis supports the inference that ABC's quality of
coverage may have been better.[29]

TABLE 12

TOPICS OF CRISIS REPORTS

TOPIC	ABC	CBS	NBC	ALL
Crisis Narrative	3	4	4	11
Terrorism	3	5	1	9
Israeli Reactions	1	4	3	8
Polit. Complications	2	1	5	8
U.S. Reactions	2	3	3	8
Olympic Disruption	4	1	2	7
Arab Reaction	1	2	2	5
Egyptian Reaction	1	2	1	4
Israeli Retaliation	1	1	1	3
U.S. Athlete Burial	1	1	1	3
Hostage Personality	1	1	1	3
Arabs' Funeral		1	1	2
Olympic Memorial	1	1		2
Bodies go to Israel	1		1	2
W. German Reaction			1	1
Palestinian Views		1		1
Soviet Reaction		1		1
M. Spitz Hides			1	1
Total				79

4.8 Explanation of Table 13

Table 13 depicts the percentage of each day's news hole and of all days' news holes that were devoted to coverage of the Munich Olympic crisis by the three networks.

The percentage of daily news broadcasts devoted to the crisis was determined by dividing the total seconds of crisis stories by the day's news hole. The total daily percentages were computed by dividing the total of the day's crisis coverage of all three networks by the total of the day's news hole for all three networks. The total percentages for the columns were computed by dividing the total of all the six-day crisis coverage time by the total of the six-day news hole for each column.

The data suggest that the Munich Olympic crisis was the dominant news story on all three networks for a six-day period.

One figure of particular interest is the September 6 percentage for NBC. On that date almost the entire NBC news broadcast consisted of stories about the Munich Olympic crisis.

It is possible to infer that, by doing the most in-depth report of the crisis done by any network, NBC was attempting on that day to make up for its biggest mistake. On the day before, NBC had been the only network to broadcast the false report that the hostages had been freed without injury in the ambush at Furstenfeldbruck.

TABLE 13

PERCENTAGE OF NEWSCASTS DEVOTED TO CRISIS

NEWSCAST DAY	ABC	CBS	NBC	ALL
September 5	69.35	49.32	64.96	60.69
September 6	63.85	79.56	92.75	79.01
September 7	43.41	15.79	11.76	38.56
September 8	16.67	15.79	11.11	11.68
September 11	13.93	2.16	19.29	11.72
September 12	3.89	10.14	23.07	13.88
Totals	35.00	32.30	40.00	35.80

$X^2 = .85$, df = 2

4.9 Explanation of Table 14

Table 14 depicts the distribution of countries of origin for the stories of the Munich Olympic crisis on the three networks. The country of origin for each story was identified at the beginning of each story in the _Television News Index and Abstracts_. Although some of the stories that originated in the United States had film footage shot elsewhere, the coder relied strictly on the location identified at the beginning of the story for categorization.

The data indicate that more than half the stories about the Munich Olympic crisis originated in the United States. West Germany was the second-most frequent country of origin. Israel, the Arab countries and Egypt were combined to form the "Other" category.

TABLE 14

ORIGIN OF CRISIS REPORTS

ORIGIN OF STORY	ABC	CBS	NBC	ALL
United States	14	16	17	47
West Germany	7	6	6	19
Other	4	5	4	13

$x^2 = 25.63$, df $= 4$

4.10 Explanation of Table 15

Table 15 depicts the distribution of the most prevalent sources of network reports during the Munich Olympic crisis. To be included in this table a source had to be cited a minimum of five times by the three networks together.

Clearly, the leading source of reports was direct observation by reporters of the events surrounding the crisis. U.S. and Israeli government officials tied as the distant second-most cited sources, and Arab officials, including those of the PLO, were cited only one time less.

The strangest phenomenon of this table is the fact that NBC cited government and Olympic officials in West Germany four times each, and ABC and CBS only cited one or the other one time each. It is possible to infer that NBC may have been relegated to telephone conversations with West German representatives to obtain broadcast material, while ABC and CBS, which both had reporters with television cameras at the games, were busy covering the actual events of the crisis as they took place.

This inference is further supported by the strong positive Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient computed between the coverage of ABC and CBS from the data of this table. The "rho" of +0.84 indicates similar coverage by the two networks. No other significant correlation exists in this table.

TABLE 15

SOURCES OF NETWORK CRISIS REPORTS

TYPE OF SOURCE	ABC	CBS	NBC	ALL
Direct Observation	11	11	10	32
U.S. Official	2	5	4	11
Israeli Official	3	5	3	11
Arab Official	3	5	2	10
Olympic Athlete	1	3	2	6
W. German Official	1		4	5
Olympic Official		1	4	5
Victim's Neighbors	2	2	1	5
Total	23	32	30	85

$X^2 = 1.57$, df = 2

A strong Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient exists between ABC and CBS. rho = +0.84 (+0.643 is the minimum significance level at .05 level of certainty.)

4.11 Description of Network Evening News Coverage

Seventy-three Munich Olympic crisis stories were broadcast during the six weekdays of coverage. They comprised two hours and twenty-six minutes of news time. NBC devoted ten minutes and fifty seconds more coverage to the crisis than either ABC or CBS whose coverage news times were identical.

The most frequent report topic was narrative of the crisis. The second-most frequent report topic was terrorism. It appears that the story generated the same interest in "terrorism" as an issue on television that it did in news magazines, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

Almost half of all the stories presented by the three combined networks were anchor stories. This figure is skewed by the preponderance of NBC's stories being anchor stories. More than half of ABC's and CBS's stories on the crisis were presented by reporters.

While eight percent of the items involved commentary or analysis, this figure, too, was skewed. ABC devoted more than thirteen percent more items to this type of content than either of its competitors.

Because ABC's news hole was smaller than the CBS news hole, ABC's proportional coverage constituted nearly three percent more than CBS's. NBC, with a news hole of at least eleven minutes more than either other network over the six-day period, devoted a larger percentage of its broadcast to

coverage of the crisis than did either ABC or CBS.

Nearly sixty percent of the stories originated in the United States, and less than a quarter of them originated in West Germany. Stories from Israel, the Arab countries and Egypt constituted the remainder of the acknowledged places of origin.

While most of the network stories could be attributed to direct observation by the reporters, and U.S. and Israeli officials were tied for second-most cited sources, the most interesting indication of the data was that a strong similarity existed between the sources ABC and CBS cited in their reports. NBC used as many West German government officials as U.S. government officials for sources. Both other networks tended to ignore the West German government and Olympic officials.

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[1]*Television News Index and Abstracts*, ed. James B. Plinkington, Vanderbilt Television News Archive (Nashville, Tennessee: Joint University Libraries, September 1972), 1481-83.

[2]*Television News Index and Abstracts*, 1483-84.

[3]*Television News Index and Abstracts*, 1486-88.

[4]"ABC's Grim TV First," *Newsweek* 80 (September 18, 1972): 67.

[5]Jim McKay, "Eleven are Dead: Tragedy at the Games," *Television Quarterly* 11 (Fall 1973): 18.

[6]"ABC's Grim TV First," 67.

[7]McKay, 18.

[8]"Confusion in Munich," *Time* 100 (September 18, 1972): 50.

[9]Alex P. Schmid and Janny de Graaf, <u>Violence as Communication</u> (Beverly Hills: SAGE Publications, 1982), 54.

[10]"Confusion in Munich," 50.

[11]"Horror and Death at the Olympics," <u>Time</u> 100 (September 18, 1972): 23.

[12]Clive C. Aston, <u>A Contemporary Crisis</u> (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982), 66.

[13]McKay, 21.

[14]Aston, 64.

[15]"Terror at the Olympics," <u>Newsweek</u> 80 (September 18, 1972): 24.

[16]Aston, 66.

[17]"ABC's Grim TV First," 67.

[18]McKay. 22-23.

[19]McKay, 1.

[20]"ABC's Grim TV First," 67.

[21]<u>Television News Index and Abstracts</u>, 1491, 1493, 1496.

[22]<u>Television News Index and Abstracts</u>, 1525, 1527.

[23]<u>Television News Index and Abstracts</u>, 1530-31.

[24]"ABC's Grim TV First," 67.

[25]"ABC's Grim TV First," 67.

[26]"ABC's Grim TV First," 67.

[27]"ABC's Grim TV First," 67.

[28]"ABC's Grim TV First," 68.

[29]McKay, 18.

C H A P T E R V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Inferences About the Gatekeepers

"Among the vast number of problems facing the newsman (sic) none are more important than the selection and treatment of news stories. It is obvious that only a small number of stories can be chosen from those which cross the editor's desk. In addition, decisions concerning the length and position of each story must be made."[1] This study deals with the results of those decisions in the content of The Economist, Newsweek, Time and U.S. News & World Report, and the ABC, CBS and NBC network evening news programs during their coverage of the Munich Olympic crisis.

In the United States one of the editor's primary jobs in media is to produce a product that will survive in the commercial marketplace. The product must be interesting in order to entice people to watch or read it. If people don't watch or read it, the gatekeeper can't sell the advertising necessary to pay for the medium. The Munich Olympic crisis was tailor made to sell in the marketplace.

"I have an insatiable desire to see the madness of people killing each other," an Italian reporter told Jonathan Broder at the Beirut airport in 1985.[2] Such honesty is a refreshingly disgusting comment on the condition of human curiosity. The message is

clear -- the prospect of murder is fascinating.

"Terrorist attacks are news. In a competitive news industry, what one source fails to report others will seize. It would be impractical for the media to ignore terrorist events."[3]

In the case of the Munich Olympic crisis, the "terrorist event" was violent from the moment it began with the Black September[4] gunmen shooting their way into the Israeli quarters. It became more dramatic with every passing hour. The climax came when the gunmen and their hostages were transported to the airfield where the West German government tried a desperate ambush.[5] The ambush failed, but it was initially reported to the world as an unqualified success.[6] Chancellor Willi Brandt was publicly humiliated to have to report that his original information about the ambush was wrong and that all the hostages had been killed because of a tactical blunder.[7]

The world media were strongly represented at Munich to cover the Olympic games. Global television had become a reality since "the first Trans-Atlantic TV hook-up (sic) via the artificial earth satellite, Telestar-1 [took place on July 23, 1962]. The TV screen [had become] a window affording a glimpse of any corner of the globe."[8]

As soon as the situation in the Israeli quarters became known, the media switched their attention to the crisis. "By 8:00 a.m., news of the siege had been broadcast by Bavarian radio, and some of the four thousand

journalists and two thousand television reporters covering the games began to converge on gate 21. The television camera over the Olympic Stadium half a mile away was trained on Building 31 and focused on the room where the hostages were being held."[9]

"Television . . . conveyed to the world audience much of the suspense and terror of the Arab assault."[10] "Previous Olympics have had some such troubles, but this time, with the eye of the television camera peering everywhere, all the troubles were made highly visible to an estimated 1 billion TV watchers in many countries."[11] Eleven Israeli Olympic athletes were "kidnapped and murdered in a day of horror witnessed throughout the world."[12]

The news coverage of the Olympic crisis generally was accurate. The events of the day were spectacular. Because the function of the press in the United States "is to tell what is going on,"[13] the editors recognized a marketable product when it was presented to them, and they sold it.

5.2 Inferences About the Effects

"The major obstacle to freedom of expression in America is the difficulty of penetrating the media in a serious rather than a bizarre way."[14] The media paid scant attention to the problems the Palestinians encountered after they were forced out of their homeland by the establishment of Israel. Serious attempts to obtain world

105

recognition were met with the same scorn that prompted the
Munich Olympic Committee to ignore the Palestinians'
request to compete in the Olympic games.

The Palestinian leadership, realizing that "the power
to set the agenda is often the power to determine the
outcome"[15] and without the military might necessary to
force Israel from their homeland, was desperate for access
to the public agenda. Apparently, the world community's
contempt drove the Palestinians to a desperate, bizarre
plan to tell the world of their existence. They executed
the plan in Munich.

The tracks of the Soviet Union also may be discerned
in the sands of the events at the Olympics. Prior to the
Munich crisis, Soviet influence in the Middle East had
declined significantly. "With the expulsion of the Soviet
Union in 1972 by Egypt's Anwar Sadat, which marked the
lowest ebb of Soviet influence in the Middle East, there
was a proportionate increase in the official acceptance of
the PLO as a political factor by the Kremlin."[16]

"The Munich massacre appears to be the starting point
for an official Soviet policy attempting to create a public
image for the PLO which would eventually endow it with
political acceptability in a broad sphere. Repeatedly over
the years, the Soviet Union has attempted to dissociate the
PLO from its terrorist activities, particularly those
taking place outside the Middle East Area (sic). Thus, the
Munich murders were credited to the 'extremist terrorist

group "Black September.""[17]

Despite the PLO Executive Committee's announcement "disclaiming any connection with 'Black September'"[18] a few days after the Olympic crisis, "Abu Daoud himself . . . admitted, in a broadcast over Amman radio, that 'Black September' . . . did not exist as a separate organization and that all its activities were carried out by the intelligence branch of Fatah."[19]

PLO leaders were not the first to recognize that "terror can be used as a political instrument by rational men (sic) with a clearly defined policy,"[20] but "it is no accident that the era of the terrorist spectacular arrived roughly coincident with the era of highly mobile TV mini-cameras[21] and virtually instantaneous TV transmission live-by-satellite from almost anywhere on the globe."[22]

The wisdom that "inasmuch as terrorism seeks access to the public agenda, it is dependent on the media"[23] was not lost on even the earliest "terrorists." John Most wrote in his "Advice to Terrorists" published in 1884:

> We have said a hundred times or more that when modern
> revolutionaries carry out actions, what is important
> is not soley these actions themselves, but also the
> propagandistic effect they are able to achieve. Hence
> we preach not only action in and for itself, but also
> action as propaganda.[24]

The media always have been able to recognize the value of the "terrorism" headline for selling a story. "'Terrorism' is one of those contemporary terms that seizes the public's imagination, much as do the terms 'AIDS,' and 'capital punishment.' These are exotic attention-getters

(sic) that are at the same time fascinating and horrible, seductive in their ability to remove us from the ordinary into the extraordinary."[25]

Jean Maitron confirms the attractiveness of the "terrorism" story to the media in his history of the anarchist movement in France published in 1914:

> It should be noted how far the press contributed to a collective psychosis about the attacks. Throughout those troubled years the newspapers maintained a daily dynamite column; they piled on interviews and reports on the subject which to some extent could only encourage the trend.[26]

The Munich Olympic crisis ushered in a new era of warfare. Media coverage of the crisis and similar events since 1972 has helped "terrorism" to become a most efficient means of bargain-basement offensive warfare.[27] Abuelkeshk, in his 1981 study of the news treatment of Palestinians, found "that the news magazines in 1974 and 1979 gave more attention to the PLO than they did in 1970. Consistent with the findings of previous studies, media interest in the Middle East conflict was found to be highest in time of crisis and overt hostility."[28]

Abuelkeshk also found a significant pro-Israeli bias in the coverage by _Time_, _Newsweek_ and _U.S. News & World Report_:

> In general, the three magazines were extremely reluctant to criticize Israel. Even when Israel raided Palestinian refugee camps, it was reported as retaliatory actions to prevent continuation of Palestinian terrorism. Mostly the Israeli points of view were presented to explain Israeli actions, but only occasionally were Palestinian views presented to explain Palestinian actions. On those occasions,

Palestinian explanations sound somewhat illogical and unconvincing to American readers, who have been saturated previously with pro-Israeli explanations.[29]

While such coverage appears to be contrary to the objectives of the PLO, John Law, a long-time Middle East correspondent with U.S. News & World Report, explained why it is actually consistent with their objectives:

> They are trying to focus world attention on the fact that there is a Palestinian problem that hasn't been solved. I emphasize the word 'attention' for a reason: These people realize they lose world sympathy by acts of terror, but they don't really care for world sympathy. What they're striving for is to make the world realize that they are the people who were moved out of their homeland by the Israelis when Israel became a sovereign state in 1948. They feel that they ought to be able to get their land and their homes back.[30]

"The power of the media in influencing public opinion is widely recognized by policy makers and political strategists alike,"[31] and "it does not really matter if television is as powerful as some people claim it to be. If enough persons think it is powerful and if those persons act as if it is powerful, then it is powerful."[32] "'TV [,after all,] is used by all sorts of people -- people who want to sell movies, books, ideas. That's not necessarily bad; it serves a function. People understand that part of the reason [for this type of violence is] to get access to the American media.'"[33]

The effects of the Munich crisis may be categorized as short-term and long-term. The short-term political disruption "lasted seventy days, from September 6, when the incident was physically terminated and the hostage takers

were killed or arrested, until November 15, when the normal flow of events between the primary actors [, West Germany, Egypt and Israel,] was re-established."[34]

"Egypt refused to accede to the West German request to partake in the negotiations with the terrorists and as a result raised the ire of the West Germans."[35] The result was loss of Anwar Sadat's initiative in proposing a peace plan for the Middle East through West Germany.

Israel reacted quickly to the Black September operation by conducting raids into Lebanon and Syria. The Soviet representative to the United Nations, Y. Malik, sponsored a resolution to condemn the Israeli retaliation.[36] The resolution led the United States representative to the United Nations, George Bush, to cast the second-ever U.S. veto.[37]

In early November "two Palestinian guerillas seized control of a Lufthansa jetliner over Turkey and threatened to blow up the plane and its 20 passengers and crewmen unless the German Government (sic) released [the] three Arab terrorists [it had captured and] held since the assassination of 11 Israeli athletes at the Olympic Games in Munich."[38] The West German Cabinet was "called into emergency session, and, six hours later, the three Palestinians arrested at Furstenfeldbruck were released and flown to Zagareb in Yugoslavia. From there, the hijacked aircraft was flown to Libya, (sic) where the hostage-takers (sic) were greeted as heroes. Libyan

national radio praised the hijacking as the 'triumph of the Munich operation.'"[39] The capitulation served to further strain relations between the Israeli and West German governments and caused Israel to take its own revenge on Black September.

The Mivtzan Elohim (Wrath of God), a small group of soldiers from Israel who hunted down and killed many members of Black September, operated until 1979. "By late 1973, however, Black September had ceased to exist, its remaining members demoralized and fearful of being assassinated."[40]

The long-term effects of the Munich crisis continue today. The United Nations created its Committee on International Terrorism, and the Council of Europe created the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism as a direct result of the crisis.[41]

"Rightly or wrongly, it was the impression of many that the Munich police's tactical response was sorely inept, and that better training and contingency planning for such situations might have minimized the loss of life, if not prevented the tragedy entirely."[42] This public impression "prompted many governments to form specialized anti-terrorist task forces and crisis management teams, such as the U.S. Government's (sic) Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism and the Special Coordinating Committee of the National Security Council. At the tactical level of response, it led to the development of the special weapons

111

and tactics [SWAT] and hostage negotiating teams which (sic) have now been commonly adopted by many countries."[43]

"Moreover, it was Munich which (sic) confirmed that terrorism as a political weapon had come of age. Governments could never again be free of the fear that it could happen again at any time, without warning and with untold consequences. Munich opened an new chapter in world history."[44]

5.3   The Answer to the Research Question

The research question that led to this study was: How was the Munich Olympic crisis of 1972 covered in three U.S. news magazines, one British news magazine, and on the three U.S. television network evening news programs?

Although Newsweek's coverage was clearly the most eye-catching and voluminous of all the four news magazines studied, it is also clear that they all carried extensive news stories about the crisis except The Economist, which recorded most of the turmoil surrounding the crisis without actually reporting the events in the village.   While NBC devoted a larger percentage of its news hole to the coverage of the crisis than either ABC or CBS, all three networks gave the story thorough coverage.   The quality of ABC's coverage seems to have been the best because its better preparation to cover the Olympic games met the opportunity to cover one of the hottest news stories of the year -- in other words, luck.

The findings suggest that the Munich Olympic crisis of
1972 was the dominant news event covered during the period
studied. They indicate that the crisis and its coverage
were dramatic and had far-reaching consequences. It
appears that the news magazines and networks covered the
crisis extensively.

"Terrorism" is apparently an excellent news story.
Because it is such a good news story, it makes sense for
those who want to gain the attention of the world to use it
as a means to penetrate the media. It can be used to gain
world attention not only by the "terrorist" but also by the
politician who draws an unenforceable "hard line" against
terrorism, such as President Reagan's determined public
refusal to negotiate with terrorist states while he tried
to buy the release of American hostages with arms sent to
Iran, and by the reporter who must compete with other
reporters for broadcast time or column inches.

It is possible that the dominant play the networks and
news magazines gave the Munich Olympic crisis influenced
the priorities given to similar events, such as the Iranian
hostage crisis, the hijacking of TWA flight 847 and the
hijacking of the Kuwaiti airliner in the spring of 1988.
Future research might compare the results of this study
with results of similar studies of those events to
determine the effects in gatekeeping and possibly in viewer
perceptions of such crises.

Another possible project for future research might be

a qualitative analysis of the actual tapes of the network evening news coverage of the Munich Olympic crisis. Such a study would be a valuable augmentation to this one because all data in this study were drawn from written sources.

Still another possible research project would compare the demographics of the audiences for the four studied news magazines to determine possible relevance to the description of their coverage in this study. Such a study might demonstrate that the coverage of each magazine was tailored carefully for each magazine's target audience.

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[1] Emery L. Sasser and John T. Russell, "The Fallacy of News Judgment," Journalism Quarterly 49 (Summer 1972): 280.

[2] Jonathan Broder, "Lure of Beirut is Forbidden Fruit for Journalists," Arkansas Gazette, 21 June 1985, 21(A).

[3] Abraham H. Miller, Terrorism and Hostage Negotiations (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), 86.

[4] "The name comes from the 'black September' of 1970, when King Hussein's army smashed guerilla forces in Jordan, and the first actions for which the group claimed responsibility were aimed against the Jordanians -- the murder of their prime minister, Wasfi Tel (author's emphasis), in November last year [1971], and the attempt on the life of the Jordanian ambassador to London." ("The Blackest September," The Economist 244 [September 9, 1972]: 31.)

[5] "'We had to take a chance,' a police official said. 'The Israelis would have gone to certain death if they had been flown to an Arab Capital.'" ("Arab Terrorism -- Outraged World Seeks an Answer," U.S. News & World Report 73 [September 18, 1972]: 21.) "A final decision was taken to appear to capitulate and lure the hostage-takers (sic) to Furstenfeldbruck where they could be ambushed. This plan was approved by Mrs. Meir, Brandt, and Brundage, although all realized, as Schreiber later conceded, 'the chances of success were small.'" (Clive C. Aston, A

Contemporary Crisis [Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood
Press, 1982], 74.)   "West German officials, bargaining with
the gunmen, convinced them that they would be sent to Cairo
along with the hostages.   This was a desperate ruse, (sic)
to get the guerrillas to an airfield where an ambush was
set up." ("Arab Terrorism -- Outraged World Seeks an
Answer," 18.)

[6]"The torment of the entire event was heightened by
confusion created in the public mind by contradictory
reports from German and Olympic officials after the gunfire
erupted at the airport." (David Binder, "A 23 Hour [sic]
Drama," New York Times, 6 September 1972, 1.)   "Reports
from the airfield were confused, even contradictory.   At
11:30 p.m. Brundage told Ahlers he had just been informed
by a police officer at the airfield that 'all of the
Israeli athletes are saved.'   Ahlers, in turn, informed the
press . . . .   Ten minutes later, Genschler ordered a
complete news black-out from the airfield.   However, news
of the hostages' safe release had already been flashed
throughout the world." (Aston, 81.)

[7]"Five marksmen from the squad at the Olympic
Village were also sent to Furstenfeldbruck.   They had
already been issued with the Heckler and Koch (, the West
German version of the standard NATO 7.62 self-loading
rifle, which had been equipped specially with night sights.
Schreiber, when later asked why he had only sent five
marksmen when there were (sic) a total of eight hostage
takers, replied, 'it was regarded as unlikely that more
than four of the terrorists would be out in the open at the
same time.'   Furthermore, he added, there were 'three
centers of operation, and it was impossible with the time
and distance involved to get more sharpshooters into
position.'" (Aston, 72-3.)   "Two Arabs left the
helicopters and examined the Airliner.   As they started
back toward the helicopters, the police opened fire.   The
Guerrillas returned the fire.   As the gun battle raged, one
of the Arabs hurled a grenade into a helicopter, setting it
ablaze.   Another gunned down hostages."   ("Arab Terrorrism
-- Outraged World Seeks an Answer," 18.)   "The first shots
killed Guevera and the two hostage takers standing by the
helicopters.   Somehow, they missed Masalha.   As he ran for
cover toward the first helicopter, he opened fire and shot
Captain Gunnar Ebel, one of the helicopter pilots, through
the lung, seriously wounding him.   The other hostage takers
opened fire on the control tower, shooting out the search
lights[,] which were illuminating the tarmac, and killing
Anton Fliegenbauer, a policeman." (Aston, 80.)

[8]Yuri Kolosov, "Global TV and Its Prospects," The
Democratic Journalist 12 (1972): 16-17.

[9]Aston, 64.

[10]"Behind the Rise in Crime and Terror," U.S. News & World Report 73 (November 13, 1973): 47.

[11]"Can the Olympics Survive?" U.S. News & World Report 73 (October 9, 1972): 22.

[12]"Rogers: 'Suppress These Demented Acts,'" U.S. News & World Report 73 (October 9, 1972): 26.

[13]Mary McGregory, "Hostages and a Free Press," The Boston Globe, 28 June 1985, 13.

[14]Jerome A. Barron, Freedom of the Press for Whom? (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1973), xiii.

[15]Paul A. Samuelson and William D. Nordhaus, Economics, Twelfth Edition (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1985), 709.

[16]"In retrospect, one can see where the Soviet Union's position in the Middle East was markedly improved after the Munich massacre of Israeli athletes. The increase in Israeli-Arab fighting[,] which immediately followed that tragic incident[,] renewed Arab reliance on Soviet weapons supplies, thus helping to re-establish Soviet influence in the region. The deterioration of United States and West German relations with the Arab states was an unexpected bonus. Moreover, the stated elements of Soviet policy towards the West and Israel were very similar indeed to those enunciated by the 'Black September' sub-group of the PLO[,] whicch killed the Israeli athletes. After the deed, a spokesman said: 'The operation was aimed at exposing the close relations between the treacherous German authorities and United States imperialism on the one hand and the Zionist enemy's authorities on the other.'" (Roberta Goren, The Soviet Union and Terrorism [Boston: George Allen & Unwin, 1984], 115-16.)

[17]Goren, 116.

[18]Goren 116.

[19]"During that broadcast he mentioned that Arafat's chief lieutenant, Abu Iyad, had planned the Munich massacre. Whether that massacre was planned by Abu Daoud or Abu Iyad is irrelevant to the case, as both are and were at the time, executiives of the PLO." (Goren, 140.)

[20]"Terrorism is Developing Into a Form of Total War," U.S. News & World Report 73 (December 11, 1972): 50.

[21]Jim McKay, whose coverage of the Munich crisis won him two Emmy awards in 1973, writes of the news coverage: "On the two-way radio in his car, [Marvin] Bader suggested to [Jacques] Lesgardes that the minicam unit be fired up. The crash unit was originally thought of as a wandering camera to see all of Munich and to cover anything else that might come up. ABC sports was aware of the need for a camera to cover the unexpected, the unforeseeable happening. Jacques told him the unit was already being set up." (Jim McKay, "Eleven are Dead: Tragedy at the Games," Television Quarterly 11 [Fall 1973]: 22.)

[22]"Thë Media and the Hostages," The Chicago Tribune, 28 June 1985, 22.

[23]Abraham H. Miller, Terrorism and Hostage Negotiations (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), 83.

[24]John Most, "Advice for Terrorists," Freiheit (September 13, 1884), in The Terrorism Reader: A Historical Anthology, ed. Walter Laqueur (Philadelphia: The Temple University Press, 1978), 105.

[25]Philip W. Leon, The Military, the Media, and International Terrorism, (Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: U.S. Army War College, April 7, 1986), 5-6.

[26]Jean Maitron, "The Era of the Attendats [Correctly spelled]," Histoire du Mouvement Anarchiste en France (1880-1914), in The Terrorism Reader: A Historical Anthology, ed. Walter Laqueur (Philadelphia: The Temple University Press, 1978), 97.

[27]"My colleague Stanley Hauerwas is persuaded (sic) [convinced] that the crossbow and the longbow were outlawed because they constituted a new and formidable handicap to the way knights fought in battle. It was thus as much a class issue as a moral one since the newer forms of archery gave too much advantage to the peasants and threatened the entire order of chivalry. Even without this suggestion, one might observe that much of the outrage against guerrilla warfare, and subsequently against insurgent terrorism, has been turned by the affluent upon the poor." (James Tunstead Burtchael, "Moral Responses to Terrorism," in Fighting Back ed. Neil C. Livingstone and Terrell E. Arnold [Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1985], 209.)

[28]Abdelkarim Ahmad Abuelkeshk, "Coverage of PLO and Palestinians in the Three U.S. News Magazines" (Master's Thesis, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1981), 122.

[29]Abuelkeshk, 124.

117

[30]John Law, "'These are Very Desperate Men;' Interview With Mideast Correspondent," U.S. News & World Report 73 (September 18, 1972): 21.

[31]Abuelkeshk, 7.

[32]Sander Vanocur, "The Role of the Media," in Hydra of Carnage ed. Uri Ra'anan and others (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1986), 260.

[33]Fred Rothenberg, "Is TV, Too, Held Hostage by Crisis?" The Milwaukee Journal, 30 June 1985, 4.

[34]Clive C. Aston, A Contemporary Crisis (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982), 117.

[35]Miller, 99.

[36]Goren, 116.

[37]Robert Alden, "U.S. Casts a Veto in U.N. on Mid East, Citing Terrorism," The New York Times, 11 September 1972, 1.

[38]"Behind the Rise in Crime and Terror," U.S. News & World Report 73 (November 13, 1973): 41-42.

[39]Aston, 113.

[40]Neil C. Livingstone and Terrell E. Arnold, eds., Fighting Back (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1986), 127.

[41]Aston, 49.

[42]Miller, 40.

[43]Aston, 49. "One of the lessons of the Munich Tragedy is that every government needs to have at its disposal a highly trained shock force that can be brought in when the preventive measures have failed and a terrorist squad has to be destroyed quickly, and its hostages, if possible, saved. This is what the Germans failed to do. The men who were supposed to place themselves in the plane to deal with the Black September group at close quarters were actually allowed to cry off after voting on whether they were prepared to take the risk -- an action that would be defined as mutiny on most police forces." ("The Anti-terrorists," The Economist 244 [September 16, 1972]: 16.) "The original plan decided upon by the crisis staff had called for two or three policemen to be disguised as Lufthansa personnel to hide in the tail section of the aircraft. This was dropped, however, when the police

refused to volunteer. A senior Munich police official backed his men by stating that they were 'not trained or mentally equipped for this sort of kamikaze work[,] and we have no right to ask them to do it, particularly since the Israelis were adamant that they would not release any of the 200 Arab prisoners." (Aston, 79.)

[44]Aston, 49.

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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the
Graduate Faculty, have examined a thesis entitled

NEWS MAGAZINE AND NETWORK TELEVISION NEWS COVERAGE

OF THE MUNICH OLYMPIC CRISIS, 1972

presented by Edwin Clements Parrish III

a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts

and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy·
of acceptance.

_____
Prof. Dale R. Spencer

_____
Prof. Rod Gelatt

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Asst. Prof. Kurt Wildermuth